COLUMBUS

OR THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA

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COLUMBUS:

OR,

THE DISCOVERY OF AMERICA.

BY

GEORGE CUBITT.

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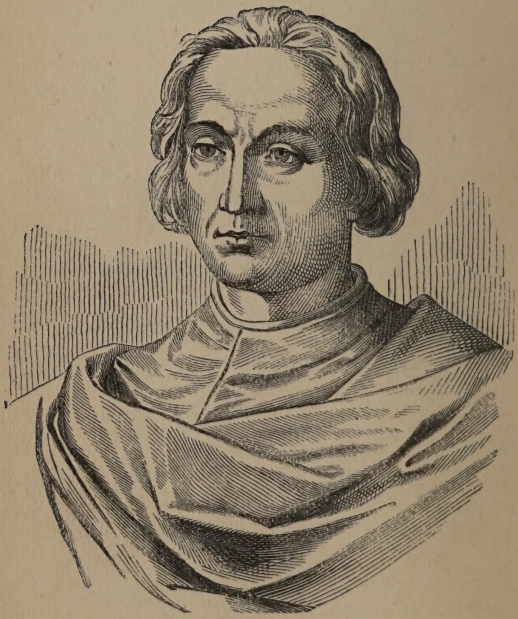


COLUMBUS.

COLUMBUS.

CHAPTER I.

MARITIME DISCOVERY UNDER PRINCE HENRY OF PORTUGAL—BIRTH, PARENTAGE, EDUCATION, AND EARLY LIFE OF COLUMBUS.

FOR ages, to the more civilised nations of Europe, the greater portion of the world was unknown. All beyond the limits of the Roman empire was what the very imperfect maps then possessed stated it to be, *terra incognita*. Northern Europe was considered as barbarous, and its higher boundary-coast was little understood. Of eastern Asia it was only known that there *were* regions to the north and east. The Mediterranean shores of Africa, from Palestine to the 'Pillars of Hercules' (the Straits of Gibraltar), were, of course, known, and a small portion of the coasts washed by the Atlantic; but nothing beyond. How far Asia stretched to the east, and what was beyond the west of Europe, if anything were beyond, between Portugal and the extreme limits of Asia, except the unpassed Atlantic, was as un-

known as if it existed not. While navigation was confined to the coasts, and mariners dared not venture out of sight of land, such ignorance was sure to continue. The discovery of the 'mariner's compass' introduced a new era.

This most important instrument had long been known to that singular people, the Chinese; and it is generally believed that Marco Polo, who returned from his Eastern travels about A.D. 1260, brought the account of it into Europe. Its European origination, however, is involved in obscurity. About the middle of the fifteenth century, a tolerably correct notion of the form of Africa appears to have been acquired by the Portuguese, probably by means of the trading Moors; and some years subsequently, the Portuguese, then a mercantile and enterprising people, not having been brought down by the lethargy occasioned by priestly domination and long years of ignorance, were desirous of sharing the trade of India with Alexandria and the East. Expeditions, therefore, were fitted out for the circumnavigation of Africa. A strong impulse had been given to the public mind by the patriotic zeal of Prince Henry, son of John I. and Philippa of Lancaster, sister of Henry IV. of England. He had accompanied his father into Africa, on an expedition against the Moors, and had received much information concerning countries to the south, then altogether unknown in Europe. The Canary Islands had again been discovered, and voyages were occasion-

ally made to them, and from them to the opposite shores of Morocco; so that the coast, from the Straits to Cape Bojador, was tolerably known. Leaving the court, he took up his residence near Cape St. Vincent, in full view of the ocean; and there, with men eminent in science, he pursued his geographical studies, and formed plans of discovery. It occurred to him, that if Africa could be circumnavigated, a sea-road to India would be opened, and at least a share of its lucrative trade be diverted from the Venetians to his own country. He communicated to others a portion of his own enthusiasm; and many who had hitherto believed that the navigation of the torrid zone was impracticable, and who dreaded the idea of sailing beyond Cape Bojador, began, not only to think it possible to extend their voyages with safety, but earnestly to desire to do so. Expeditions, therefore, were fitted out. The improvements already effected in nautical science were brought into practical navigation. Cape Bojador was doubled, the coast was explored as far as Cape de Verde, the Azores were discovered, and Prince Henry, already anticipating the results of the spirit he had thus roused into action, obtained, according to the custom of the age, a papal bull, by which Portugal was invested with the sovereignty of whatever lands might be discovered in the Atlantic, as far as India. This enterprising prince, who was so far beyond his own age, died in November, 1472; and though the impulse he had

communicated was diminished by his death, still much of it remained in operation. Africa had been explored, on its coast, as far as the twenty-second degree of south latitude; and in 1487 Bartholomew Diaz returned from a voyage in which he had been enabled to discover three hundred leagues more of coast, and reach the Great Cape, which, in point of fact, he doubled in a storm, though without knowing it. He named it *Cabo Tormentoso*, or the 'Stormy Cape.' It was only when passed, about ten years afterwards, by Vasco de Gama, on his voyage to India, that it received its new and permanent appellation,—that of the 'Cape of Good Hope.'

Between the crowns of Portugal and Castile there were frequent disputes, arising from the navigation of their subjects respectively. Maritime questions regularly engaged the attention of the Spaniards; and one of the high officers of state bore the title of 'Admiral of Castile.' Portugal was the more enterprising of the two,—perhaps because the more united. Spain, as yet, was *many* rather than *one;* and the contests between the various sovereigns of the several states prevented all unity of action as to without. Portugal was connecting itself with Africa and India, while Spain was moving slowly and unconsciously to the *oneness* which it had to attain before discovery could fix new gems in her crown. And at length, in 1479, when the 'war of the succession' was ended, and Ferdinand of Arragon

and Isabella of Castile reigned unitedly over all Spain, except the small kingdom of Granada in the south-west, to which the once triumphant Spanish Arabs were now restricted, an agreement with Portugal seemed to shut up the only door through which it was believed so long that maritime enterprise could pass. Portugal renounced all claim to the throne of Castile; and it was, on the other hand, agreed that, though the Spaniards should keep the Canaries, they should renounce to the Portuguese all rights of commerce and discovery on the western coast of Africa, and to the southward. Only the western Atlantic, therefore, was left to them; and of stretching beyond its far horizon no Spaniard then dreamt. Here, therefore, the progress of Spanish discovery paused; nor was the idea of its revival, especially in the only practicable direction, ever presented to the country, till the foreigner, poor, long-neglected, and despised Christopher Columbus, not only suggested the idea, but implored to be enabled to carry it into effect.

Christopher Columbus, one of the most celebrated names in the history of mankind, was an Italian. He was born at Genoa, about the year 1435. His parents were poor, but reputable. His father was a wool-comber. He had two brothers, Bartholomew and (as the Italian name Giacomo is in Spanish) Diego, with one sister. Christopher was the oldest child.

His parents were attentive to his education in youth. Together with reading, writing, and

arithmetic, he made some proficiency in drawing. His mind, however, was most strongly inclined to geography, and he very early manifested a decided predilection for a seafaring life. He himself, in subsequent years, was accustomed devoutly to refer this to a Divine impulse, awakening desires, and directing to studies, preparing him for the work which, at length, he was the instrument of accomplishing. His father perceived his inclinations, and, as far as his abilities allowed, sought to give him an education suited to his disposition. He was sent to the University of Pavia, and was taught geometry, geography, astronomy, and navigation. He also became familiar with Latin. But he could only remain a short time at Pavia; and much of the knowledge which afterwards he evidently possessed was the result of his own diligent improvement of whatever leisure he might, at different periods, be able to command. He stands among those who furnish valuable lessons to the young, as well as an encouraging example. Through subsequent neglect, the rudiments which he had thoroughly acquired would have passed away with his youth, and been of no service. He went to school when he left school, becoming his own teacher, and resolving to be an assiduous scholar. He was thus the better prepared, through the vigour which exercise gave to his mind, to make the best use of the information he had received. His character, too, through his enlightened and sound judgment, became decided

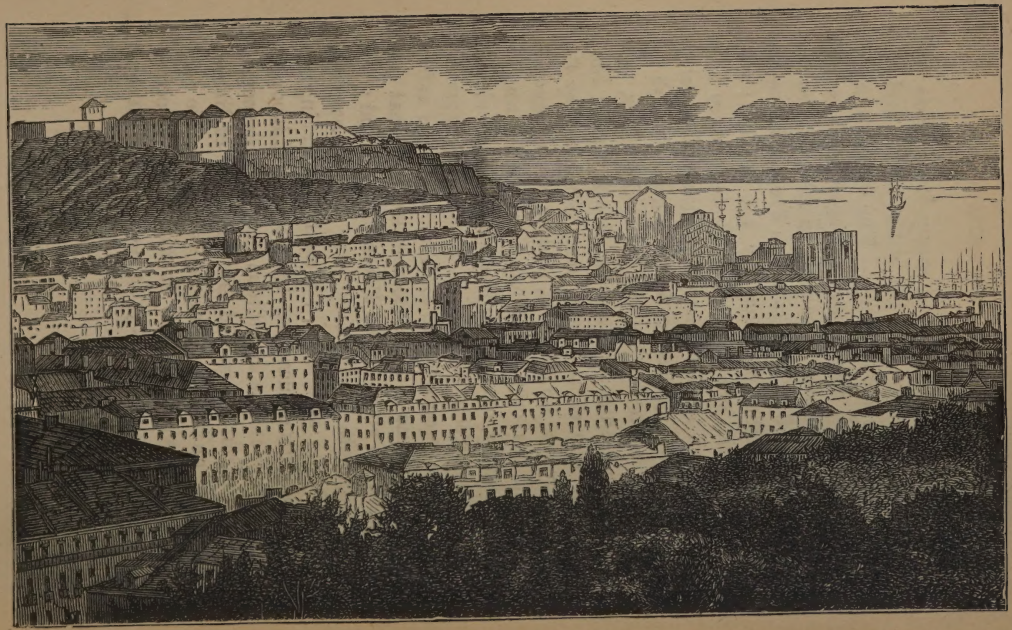
and firm. He acquired energy, and understood the right way in which it was to be employed. But for such early labours he had never been the discoverer of the 'New World.'

And his merit was the greater, because this improvement of the rudiments of knowledge was prosecuted in the midst of the toilsome activities of the profession on which he had resolved to enter, and in which he won such solid and abiding renown. He was only fourteen when he left the university, and commenced his nautical career. Of this portion of his history few particulars have been recorded. It is said that he first embarked with a bold and hardy captain bearing the same family name, and who was distinguished for his bravery. The sea, even in the enclosed Mediterranean, had not the safety which navigators now experience. Piracy was so common as almost to be regarded as lawful: those, therefore, who were engaged in pursuits peaceful in their real character, were obliged always to be prepared to defend themselves against those hostile attacks, which were so frequent as to furnish subjects of regular expectation. The Mohammedans, especially, were both powerful and enterprising. Discipline and courage were therefore almost as necessary in trading-vessels as in ships purposely equipped for war. It was a rugged school in which Columbus, when scarcely emerged from boyhood, had to learn the duties of a seaman; but he profited greatly from the experience thus afforded.

His first *recorded* voyage was in a naval expedition fitted out, in 1459, by the Duke of Calabria, for the purpose of attacking the kingdom of Naples. Genoa contributed both ships and money, and many private adventurers were engaged. Old Colombo was among them, and had the command of a squadron. Columbus sailed with him. The services of the expedition occupied four years. In the course of it Columbus is believed to have distinguished himself, though the particulars have not been transmitted to later times. This is inferred from his appointment, at one period, to a separate command. He was sent to the port of Tunis, to cut out a galley which had anchored there; and he performed this duty with great resolution and with complete success.

Of several years of his life, after this expedition, there are left only very general accounts. He was chiefly employed in the Mediterranean, then the great water-field both of commerce and naval warfare. One anecdote has been narrated by his son Fernando. He was sailing with a nephew of his old captain, himself a furious corsair, so noted for his bold deeds, that the Mohammedan mothers of northern Africa used to endeavour to terrify their children, when unruly, by employing his name. On one occasion he laid wait for four richly-laden Venetian galleys, returning from Flanders. He fell in with them on the coast of Portugal, between Cape St. Vincent and Lisbon. The attack and defence were conducted with

bravery and vigour, and many lives were lost. The ships grappled with each other, and the sailors fought man to man. The vessel in which Columbus had sailed was engaged with a very large Venetian one. The combustible missiles that were employed set the galley on fire. The vessels had been lashed together for the combat; and, as they could not be separated, both were soon wrapped in flames. The crews threw themselves into the water, and swam for their lives, though the shore was several miles distant. Columbus, who was among them, saw an oar floating near him, probably one of the large ones employed by the galley-rowers: he seized it, and by resting upon it increased his own buoyancy; and as he was an able swimmer, he stood before long, though almost exhausted, upon dry land. Recovering from his fatigue, he proceeded to Lisbon, where he safely arrived. Some of his historians suppose that this was his first visit to the Portuguese capital; but more accurate research by later writers has cast doubt on the statement. Washington Irving, on the whole, concludes that his going to Lisbon at first 'was not the fortuitous result of desperate adventure, but proceeded from a spirit of liberal curiosity; and in the pursuit of honourable fortune,' at a place which, at that time, afforded 'ample attractions for a person of his inclinations and pursuits.'



LISBON.

CHAPTER II.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE—CHARACTER—MARRIAGE OF COLUMBUS—RESIDENCE AT LISBON.

IT was about the year 1470 that Columbus arrived in Portugal, being then about thirty-five years of age. Washington Irving, who had thoroughly studied the minute descriptions of him given by his contemporaries, and combined the scattered notices into what appears to be a natural and harmonious result, thus presents it: 'He was tall, well-formed, and muscular, and of an elevated and dignified demeanour. His visage was long, and neither full nor meagre; his complexion fair and freckled, and inclined to ruddy; his nose aquiline; his cheek-bones were rather high; his eyes light grey, and apt to enkindle; his whole countenance had an air of authority. His hair, in his youthful days, was of a light colour, but care and trouble soon turned it to grey, and at thirty years of age it was quite white. He was moderate and simple in diet and apparel, eloquent in discourse, engaging and affable with strangers, and of an amiableness and suavity in domestic life that strongly attached his household to his person. His temper was naturally irritable; but

he subdued it by the magnanimity of his spirit, comporting himself with a courteous and gentle gravity, and never indulging in any intemperance of language. Throughout his life he was noted for a strict attention to the offices of religion; nor did his piety consist in mere forms, but partook of that lofty and solemn enthusiasm with which his whole character was strongly tinctured.'

While residing at Lisbon, he became acquainted with the family of Bartolomeo Moñis de Palestrello, an Italian cavalier, who had died a short time previously. Palestrello was one of those distinguished navigators whom Prince Henry delighted to call around him, and to employ. He had, under his auspices, colonised and governed the island of Porto Santo, about forty miles to the north-east of Madeira. He had left a daughter, Doña Felipa, to whom Columbus became attached, and whom he soon afterwards married. That Felipa de Palestrello, though a lady of rank, had no fortune, would seem to indicate that the union was entirely one of affection.

At all events, his connection with the family of the deceased navigator was in perfect agreement with all his own habits of thought and feeling, and contributed powerfully to lead him onward in the path he had chosen for himself. On his marriage, he became an inmate of the house in which his wife had hitherto resided with her mother. The widow perceived the strong interest which he took in nautical affairs, and in their

family conversations related to him all that she knew of the voyages and expeditions of her husband. She likewise put into his hands the papers which had been left her; and thus Columbus was enabled to collect the valuable and stirring information which he would find in the charts, journals, and other manuscripts of Palestrello. To us who know the subsequent history of the great navigator, these domestic colloquies assume a very interesting character.

The life of Columbus had hitherto been rough, as well as active, and we see him with pleasure at repose in the bosom of a family every way adapted to his tastes and principles. He had anchored, after a boisterous voyage, in a pleasant harbour, but with the evident purpose of refitting his vessel, and preparing again to put to sea. He pursued his studies, he drew maps and charts for the purpose of contributing to the support of his family, and sailed once or twice to the coast of Guinea. The family removed, also, for a period, to Porto Santo, where Palestrello had been governor, and where his wife had inherited some small property. It was in this island that his son, Diego, was born. In this almost barren spot, chiefly composed of basalt rock, the highest eminence being not more than five hundred feet, there would not be the confusion which so easily distracts the attention in a metropolis, and that metropolis a sea-port. Is it too much to suppose that here, ascending to the summit of the rocky

hill behind the town, he would gaze on the vast expanse of ocean spreading westward, and ruminate on what might be beyond the waves that rolled before him?

In 1474, the scheme of voyaging to India by sailing directly westward appears to have been fully formed in his mind; but it must previously have often occupied his active and anxious thoughts. A sister of his wife was married to another of Prince Henry's navigators, Pedro Coreo, who also had at one time been Governor of Porto Santo. With him, we may be well assured, conversations would frequently be held on subjects which, not only were generally exciting in society at large, but which moved his own mind with such especial force. Already enough was known to fan the flame which was now enkindled. Imagination invested India with wealth and magnificence, and with all the wonders of an unknown region; and who could tell what other regions, not less wealthy, not less wonderful, awaited the discoveries of science, skill, and courage? The dream of Plato, respecting the island Atalantis, far away in the Western Ocean, had been revived; and, especially among sailors, rumours were afloat, often far more exciting than realities. With none of these would Columbus be unacquainted; and even his well-balanced mind could not fail to be moved by them. But he was too thoughtful to be governed by what was only rumour; he was only stimulated by it to more

extensive research and more diligent study. The grand object was the discovery of such a route to India as might be safe to navigators and profitable to commerce; and by all but himself the direction in which this route was sought was by the circumnavigation of Africa: he conceived the idea, which ultimately produced the unconquerable resolution to work it out in practice, of turning from the difficult and dangerous coasting-voyage around a continent only partially known, and directing his daring course to the west, seeking to cross the ocean only known by the waves which dashed upon its eastern shores.

We cannot dismiss the idea that Columbus, at Porto Santo, formed his great resolution. Standing on its highest ground, and looking eastward, he would know that before him, from north to south, vast continents stretched, teeming with inhabitants. Carrying his thoughts still onward, the existence of the Indian regions was a well-known fact, and of India the eastern limits were unknown; no geographer had drawn, from certain knowledge, the farthest sea-board line. Turning to the west, where nothing but the ever-rolling waves met his view, and sea and sky seemed to meet on the distant horizon, would he not ask himself, How near does farthest India approach that line? He knew it to be the limit of European knowledge; but he also knew that it was no barrier to them who would boldly hold on their course to the *far west;* and why might not he

thus arrive, with greater speed and safety, at the *far east?* Such, at all events, was the great idea on which his mind was brooding, when, after two or three years, we find him again at Lisbon.

CHAPTER III.

GROUNDS UPON WHICH COLUMBUS FOUNDED HIS BELIEF OF THE EXISTENCE OF UNDISCOVERED LANDS IN THE WEST.

'COMING events cast their shadows before.' Seldom does any great occurrence break on the unprepared minds of men with astounding abruptness. Unformed opinions begin to assume shape, and rumours multiply and thicken, till expectation stands on tiptoe, and looks for a something anticipated, but unknown. Long before the showers come down, the invisible vapour has been ascending, till the atmosphere is surcharged, and becomes hazy, and clouds small as the human hand begin to appear, and, by-and-by, unite to cover the heavens with blackness, and there is the sound as of abundance of rain.

Even among the ancients there had been vague suppositions of land far away over the western ocean. And when the true form of the earth had been ascertained, the geographers had endeavoured to collect all that could be gathered from both fact and rumour to complete the map of the globe. Columbus had studied both the theories of the ancients, and the systems of modern geographers.

Of the three hundred and sixty degrees of the earth's equatorial circumference, he reckoned that two hundred and twenty-five (fifteen hours) had been known even to the early geographers, and that fifteen more, in all two hundred and forty, had been added by the discovery of the Azores and Cape de Verde Islands. From these, eastward, two-thirds of the circumference were known: one-third, from the farthest known westward point, to that by joining which the circle would be completed, remained yet to be explored. He thought that the unknown parts of Asia might extend farther, possibly *much* farther, to the east, and thus considerably curtail the distance over which it was necessary to pass. The Arabian geographers reckoned the degree to be much smaller than was usually thought by others; and the opinion appears to have been embraced by Columbus. The real distance, therefore, would be, comparatively, not so very great, and land might be discovered lying much nearer to Europe than was commonly imagined; so that there was nothing, in the estimation of Columbus, which might not be accomplished by science and skill, united to vigilance and courage.

Such seem to have been his opinions in 1474. He communicated them in a letter addressed to a friendly correspondent at Florence, Paolo Toscanelli, a learned and inquiring Italian cosmographer. Toscanelli, in reply, afforded him all the information he could give, chiefly derived

from the narrative of Marco Polo, a Venetian, who, in the preceding century, had travelled into the remotest parts of Asia, ascertaining much, and by magnifying the distance actually travelled, —which in the countries and times of slow travelling, might very easily, and with no bad intention, be done,—conjecturing more. Beyond the extremity of the Asiatic continent he described certain islands, still farther to the eastward, abounding in marvels and wealth. Toscanelli encouraged Columbus in his purpose of seeking India by sailing to the west; and calculated that, from Lisbon to these Oriental islands, the distance could not be more than four thousand miles, a sixth, instead of a third, of the earth's circumference.

Nor did the adventurous, but cautious and inquiring navigator neglect to gather all the facts and rumours within his reach, extracting from them whatever information they might supply. He conversed with veteran navigators, and with those inhabitants of the recently discovered islands to the west whom he chanced to meet. He heard of nothing adverse to his conjectures; and much that, in several ways, confirmed them. An inhabitant of Madeira told him that he had once sailed a hundred leagues to the west, and had seen there islands in the distance. Another told him, that once, in a voyage to Ireland, he had seen land to the westward. These were, indeed, rumours, and groundless ones; but there were

facts which strengthened the suppositions to which they gave rise. A pilot in the service of the King of Portugal told him that, at the distance of four hundred and fifty leagues from Cape St. Vincent, he had found a piece of carved wood, in the shaping of which it was plain that iron had not been employed, floating in the water. His brother-in-law, Pedro Correo, also told him that a similar piece of wood had drifted from the same quarter on the shore of Porto Santo: he added, that he had heard from the King of Portugal that reeds of an immense size had been washed on the same island, evidently from the west. Westerly winds had likewise brought floating to the Azores large pine-trees, such as were not to be found in those islands.

But perhaps the most remarkable circumstance was, as stated to him by some of the inhabitants, that on the island of Flores, one of the most westerly of the Azores, the bodies of two men, different from any known race, had been cast by the waves. Everything seemed to tell of vegetation and inhabitants, and therefore land, in the far west. By investigation and study, therefore, as complete as circumstances allowed, his theory became fixed. And along with it was mixed a strong religious feeling. The unknown inhabitants of these undiscovered regions were men, human beings like himself, owing their existence to the same Creator; but not, like himself, instructed in His knowledge and fear, His worship

and service. Little was known of the countries of the east; but that little presented the people, with the exception of one nation, that was reported to be Christian, as altogether devoted to idolatry. Among the studies of Columbus, the ancient prophecies of holy Writ were, in some degree at least, included; and these spoke of the ends of the earth as being brought to see the salvation of God. He desired not less the extension of his own faith, than the enlargement of geographical knowledge and the improvement of science. His were not the wild schemes of the daring and reckless adventurer. They resulted from wide examination and profound thought; and, being sanctified by religion, animated him with a noble enthusiasm, and communicated such self-possession and dignity, that, humble comparatively as was his station, he stood upright even in the presence of crowned heads. Loftier conceptions and designs were never cherished by mortal man. And they were his own. His calculations were based on knowledge attainable by all; but he only, of all his contemporaries, had the patient industry which could collect and arrange them, and the capacity and power to embrace their vast results, as well as the cool but indomitable energy and perseverance necessary to their effectuation.

The very conditions he proposed, when his plans were formed, and he was ready to enter upon his stupendous task, disclosed the magnifi-

cence of his own mind. He was to take his place among the highest class of European subjects, winning for himself the patent of a nobility, in the splendour of which that of ancestry should grow pale, as the moon is dimmed by the brightness of the fully-risen sun. The supremacy of the sovereign who should enable him to accomplish his stupendous task he would readily acknowledge; but as viceroy of the lands he discovered, only to the monarch to whose dominions he brought such marvellous annexations would he be the subject. If ever man toiled to the summit of human greatness by a path first marked out by himself, that man was Christopher Columbus.

CHAPTER IV.

EVENTS IN PORTUGAL RELATIVE TO DISCOVERY—PROPOSITION OF COLUMBUS TO THE PORTUGUESE COURT.

THE enthusiasm of Columbus was as enlightened as it was grand. The sublimity of his conceptions as to the future produced no negligence as to subordinate and present duties. Contemplating at least the commencement of the final exploration of the world, he attended with diligence to the concerns of his family. We have seen that he employed his geographical knowledge in the construction of maps and charts, which he sold to provide means for his domestic expenditure; and, limited as these means were, it is delightful to see them so employed as to exhibit the future discoverer of the New World as the dutiful son and the affectionate brother. He contributed to the support of his aged father at Genoa, and to the education of his younger brothers. He sought employment, too, as a navigator; and not only sailed more than once to the coast of Guinea, but voyaged, on one occasion, into the northern seas, visiting Iceland, probably the *Ultima Thule* of the ancients; the difference between its actual position and that which they

assigned to it being easily explained by the scantiness and obscurity of their geographical knowledge. All the while the great idea was brooding in his mind, acquiring form in his imagination, and taking faster hold on his judgment; but its progress towards action was slow. From without he had no encouragement; for anything he knew, his was the only mind in which dwelt so noble a thought. Nor was this by any means the smallest obstacle which he had to surmount. He was a poor man, and could not command a vessel in which to sail on his own account, in directions known to all. How was he to be enabled to fit out several, for such an expedition as that which he contemplated? Less than the patronage of sovereign power would not suffice for the expense of the preparations, and for giving him the influence necessary to persuade a sufficient number of able and experienced seamen to accompany him in so hazardous, and, in some respects, so alarming an undertaking. An ordinary mind would long before have banished the conception, or only adverted to it in the day-dreamings of an indolent leisure. Not such a mind was his. He believed the idea to be practicable, he cherished the hope of finding it to be so, and resolved to seek and await the opportunity of proving that it was so to the whole world. But he waited not in idleness. He was gradually forming his plans; and when they were matured, and ready for execution, the Providence under Whose secret movements he had

been inwardly acting, prepared the way for him to commence the proceedings from which such vast results have already issued, and are still continuing to issue.

In 1481, John II., grand-nephew of Prince Henry, ascended the Portuguese throne. The cause of discovery had long been languishing, though along the coasts of Africa there was a slow advancement. But with the accession of John came a revival of enterprise. The age was more active. Printing had been discovered, books had begun to issue from the press, and the communication from mind to mind of whatever knowledge might be acquired was thus made more certain, rapid, and extensive. Knowledge became common property: all who possessed, or thought they possessed, any, felt that they could impart it easily, and the many were invited to receive their share. The general stagnancy of the human intellect had passed away never to return; and ignorance, by becoming avoidable, had become criminal. A passion for foreign research, similar to that which had governed his uncle, influenced John. India was no longer a country beyond European reach; and the accounts received from it, true, exaggerated, or fabulous, in a mind like that of John, aroused curiosity, and stimulated research. Earnestly desirous of opening India more fully to Portuguese exploration, he summoned around him men of science, especially those who were eminent in geography; and

sought from them the means of greater certainty in navigation.

One result of their investigations was the application of the *astrolabe*—the instrument by which the altitudes and angular distances of the heavenly bodies, as visible, particularly during the night, on the concave hemisphere, were measured—to the purposes of the voyager. This has since been reduced to the modern quadrant; but its most important advantages were from the first secured. The navigator was enabled, though in the beginning somewhat roughly, to measure his progress through the pathless ocean, by observing the apparent alterations of altitude, distance, and position among planets and stars. It henceforth, connecting this with the compass, became safe to voyage out of sight of the hitherto limiting landmarks. The compass exhibited the direction in which the vessel was sailing, while the astrolabe enabled the hardy mariner to sail by the *sky-marks* presented by the lofty heavens above him.

The hazard which had thus been the greatest obstacle in the way of Columbus seemed now to be removed; and knowing the wishes of the Portuguese sovereign, he resolved to apply to him. And never was there a more commanding proof of the validity of the moral axiom, that 'honesty is the best policy,' than was exhibited by the result of the application of Columbus to the King of Portugal. A piece of real *trickery*

prevented him from placing in his crown a jewel richer than any which adorned it. The proposal was referred by the monarch to three of the most learned of his councillors, one of them a bishop, and his confessor. By them it was represented as visionary; but it was too much in accordance with the feelings of John to be easily renounced: he therefore convoked a larger assembly, requiring a full discussion of the question. The opinion of Cazadilla, the bishop, prevailed here, as it had done before, and the king was advised to dismiss Columbus. Cazadilla, however, saw that John was not satisfied; he therefore craftily suggested a plan by which some trial might be given to the proposal of Columbus, without committing the dignity of the crown to that which might be no better than an idle dream. As if to assist them in their deliberations, they procured from Columbus as much information as they judged to be sufficient for their purpose; and, holding him in suspense as to their ultimate decision, orders and instructions were sent to the Cape de Verde Islands for a small vessel to pursue for some distance the intended route of the skilled and courageous navigator. The vessel left the islands, and sailed to the westward for several days. The weather then became stormy; and the wild rolling and tossing of the mighty assemblage of billows, especially as lashed by the winds till their fury seemed every hour to be increasing, so terrified both master and crew, that they retraced their

way, and rejoiced to find themselves in safety at the place they had left not long before. They then proceeded to Lisbon, and what with their fears, and what with their desire to excuse themselves, and prove that they had done right in desisting from their onward course, they so magnified the perils to which they said they had been exposed, that Cazadilla proceeded in triumph to the king with this decisive confirmation of his former opinion.

But this conduct could not be concealed from Columbus. Still believing the correctness of his opinions, he was indignant that such an inefficient method of demonstrating their impracticability had been employed; and still more indignant that the method involved an attempt to cheat him out of the honour and benefits which, if attainable, properly belonged to himself. Besides, his circumstances had become painfully embarrassing. His private studies had interfered with his plans for obtaining a livelihood; his wife was dead, leaving him a widower, with his son Diego, then a mere child. Portugal had now no tie on him; and not even some disposition said to be manifested on the part of John to renew the negotiation could induce him to continue there. Taking Diego with him, therefore, toward the close of 1484 he departed from Portugal; and thus its unwise monarch, by listening to the counsel, both foolish and dishonest, of his courtiers and ecclesiastics, lost for ever the opportunity of securing

the object of his strongest desires,—an object unlike most of those on which human desires are generally fixed, proving eventually to be far more splendid in its realisation than in its first conception.

This portion of the history of Columbus may well be closed by tracing—it is all that can be done—the little more than dimly seen traditionary recollections which are supposed to be apparent in the cloud that hangs over the following year. It is said that from Lisbon he proceeded to Genoa, where he renewed his applications; and being unsuccessful, thence to Venice, where he was also disappointed; and from like causes in both instances. Both republics were in a declining and critical state, and had not the spirit, nor indeed the ability, to comply with the proposals that were made to them. At Genoa, his father was still living; and for him, in his extreme age, he made such provision as his circumstances allowed. About the same time, he is believed to have sent his brother Bartolomeo to England, to endeavour to engage Henry VII., then renowned throughout Europe for his opulence and prudence, in his plans; but who seems to have been too prudent to hazard the expense where the gain was not certain. The great man of his age then disappears altogether from view, and is only seen as emerging from the darkness of the cloud that overshadowed him.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST ARRIVAL OF COLUMBUS IN SPAIN—MEETS FRIAR JUAN PEREZ AND MARTIN ALONZO PINZON.

THE southern boundary of Portugal is a coast-line which extends about two degrees to the eastward of Cape St. Vincent; the coast then inclines to the south-east, towards the Straits of Gibraltar, Cadiz being distant about sixty miles, on what, in the maps, is the obtuse angle thus formed. Twenty or twenty-five miles from the Portuguese boundary, there is a small sea-port, Palos de Moguer, in Andalusia, inhabited, at the times to which we are now referring, chiefly by a fishing, and so far a maritime, population. A short distance from Palos, on a solitary height overlooking the sea-coast, there stood (and still stands) an ancient Franciscan convent, dedicated to Santa Maria de Rabida. In those days and countries, the distribution of alms at the gate of convents was a regular practice. Whether this was the best way of supplying the wants of the poor, according to the principles of a correct political economy, in a well-arranged nation, is a question with which we have here nothing to do.

It might be an erroneous proceeding, and connected, in its exercise, with errors in religious doctrine, but it was designed to be an utterance of Christian compassion; and if sometimes the idle, and even the dishonest, shared in the bounty which was neither provided nor intended for them, so that sloth and a dependent mendicancy were encouraged: on the other hand, many of the honest poor received the assistance which they needed, and the blessings of many that were ready to perish came upon these distributors, whose meaning was good, whether or not the practice were wise.

One day, towards the latter end of the year 1485, a stranger, evidently a foreigner, meanly clad, but of superior manners, on foot, accompanied by a young boy, applied at the gate of the convent for alms to assist him on his journey. It was Christopher Columbus, with his son Diego, so reduced as to be obliged to seek eleemosynary aid. He was on his way to Huelvos, to seek there a brother of his deceased wife. His circumstances were now at the lowest ebb; but from this moment the tide turned, though for some time the advance of the waters seemed imperceptible. While receiving from the porter the humble refreshment of a little bread and water, the guardian of the convent, Friar Juan Perez de Marchena, happened to pass by, and, struck with the appearance of the stranger, entered into conversation with him. The friar was an intelligent

man, and had addicted himself to geographical and nautical studies. In the course of the conversation, Columbus stated his convictions, as well as the plans he had formed in his own mind. So impressed was he with the grandeur of the views which were opened before him, that he invited the friendless, and now almost hopeless, stranger to become his guest. He likewise sent for one of his scientific friends, Garria Fernandez, a physician of Palos, to join in the conversations in which he already felt so deep an interest.

It would be a noble picture, which should represent these three persons sitting together in one of the rooms of the convent: Columbus, with the earnestness of one who believed himself, and with the seriousness of one who saw inwardly a prospect before him of such extent and magnificence, yet with that mixture of despondency which so many disappointments, together with his own increasing years, could not but have produced; yet seizing on the present unexpected opportunity, which might be his last, of impressing his own convictions on the minds of others; his new friends listening with attention, with admiration, and gradually perceiving that the project, splendid as it was, and beyond the limits of present experience, was yet capable of realisation. They were both convinced, and became, from that moment, his humble but indefatigable coadjutors. The three might almost be termed the first committee for the discovery of lands be-

yond the western Atlantic. They were not content with theory. They inquired into fact. They called before them the hardy veterans of the fishing-port, from whom they learned various circumstances which seemed to require, for their explanation, the existence of inhabited countries far to the west. And soon the committee added an important member to its numbers. Martin Alonzo Pinzon, residing at Palos, the head of a family of rich and enterprising navigators, himself one of the most intelligent sea-captains of the day, after listening to the details of Columbus, became so thoroughly his disciple, that he, not only offered to share in the expenses of the undertaking, but in the undertaking itself.

And very important was the issue of their numerous conversations. The friar earnestly recommended Columbus to repair to the court of the Spanish sovereigns, Ferdinand and Isabella, and to lay his plans before them, soliciting their patronage and aid, without which it was felt that a voyage, promising such noble issues, but in many respects so mysterious, and which, in the then state of public opinion and feeling, was likely to be so perilous, could not be undertaken. Pinzon engaged to furnish money for the journey to court; and the friar, besides promising to take care of young Diego during the absence of his father, and to attend all that while to his education, offered him a letter of recommendation to a friend of his own, Fernando de Talavera, prior of the convent

of Prado, and confessor to the queen. Through his influence, the exercise of which the letter earnestly besought, it was thought that access to the royal personages might be secured.

On what apparently trifling circumstances do great events sometimes depend! Occurrences seemingly so casual, that in describing them the customary phrase, *happened*, is almost naturally employed, eventually prove to be the first steps in a progress that shall strike nations with astonishment, and give a new direction to the history of the world. He who had never seen the rising sun, could he anticipate the full brightness of day from the most equivocal diminution of darkness in the earliest dawn? He who had never seen the spreading oak, nor reflected on the powers of germination in the seed, could he anticipate the full-grown tree, trunk, branches, and leaves, from the first visible acorn-shoots? It is not for us to condemn the day of small and feeble things. The Creator and Lord of all does not despise them. The gradual development of small beginnings into vast accomplishments, is a leading characteristic of the administration of the Almighty One, Who hath set His throne in the heavens, and whose kingdom ruleth over all. A poor and friendless traveller, with his young child, apply at a convent-gate for a little bread and water; and while partaking of this simple meal, one of the superiors of the establishment thus kindly aiding the wayfarers *happens* to come by,

happens to be struck with the appearance of the mendicant, *happens* to enter into conversation with him! And he concerning whose conduct all these 'happens' have to be said, likewise *happened* to be the man whose previous studies had prepared him for the conversation, *happened* to be the man whose recommendation to an influential friend was to be the means of securing the attention of royalty! Ceaseless is the reign of God, and 'all things serve His sovereign will.' His 'never-failing providence ordereth all things in heaven and earth.' Fitting is it, therefore, that we trust in Him, and do good, even though He permit us for a time to walk in darkness and have no light. Every encouragement that our unbelieving hearts can require have we to 'cast all our care upon God, Who careth for us.'

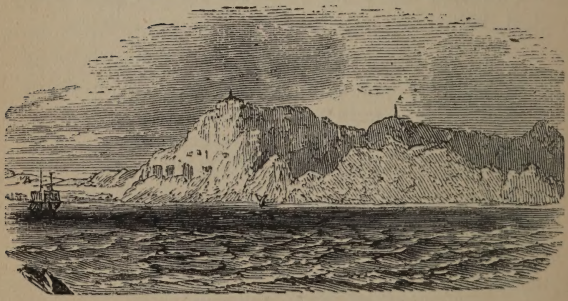
'Commit thou all thy griefs
And ways into His hands,
To His sure truth and tender care,
Who heaven and earth commands.

'Who points the clouds their course,
Whom winds and seas obey,
He shall direct thy wandering feet,
He shall prepare thy way.

'Leave to His sovereign sway
To choose and to command;
So shalt thou wondering own His way,
How wise, how strong His hand.

'Far, far above thy thought
His counsel shall appear,
When fully He the work hath wrought
That caused thy needless fear!'

Hope had once more visited the mind of Columbus; and, cheered by the kindness of his new friends, as well as encouraged by their junction and support, in the spring of 1486 he left the hospitable convent of Palos to solicit the monarchs of Spain to add a new world to their dominions.



CHAPTER VI.

CHARACTERS OF FERDINAND AND ISABELLA—PROPOSITIONS OF COLUMBUS TO THE SPANISH SOVEREIGNS.

FERDINAND and Isabella were now fully engaged in their plans for removing from Spain the last vestiges of the Mohammedan domination, which had endured there so many centuries. And while they relaxed in neither effort nor preparation, they were buoyant in the prospect of rapidly approaching and final success. They had not long before fixed their court at Cordova, that they might be nearer to Granada, the conquest of which they now believed to be certain. King and Queen of Castile and Arragon, if Granada were conquered, for the first time since the days of Roderic the Goth all Spain would be the undivided heritage of their successor. Ferdinand was, in many respects, much like our own Henry VII. Prudent to craftiness, ever mindful of his own interests, and most easily accessible when these were likely to be promoted, attentive to business, and bigoted in religion,—his character, in its several aspects, has been ably, and with great brevity, given by Washington Irving: 'He was called the wise and prudent in Spain; in

Italy, the pious; in France and England, the ambitious and the perfidious.'

The character of Isabella was different. She was beautiful and dignified in her person and manners, pious, and richly endowed in mind. Regarding her husband with strong affection, in his general policy she agreed with him; but her views were more lofty, and her desire was stronger for the improvement and well-being of her subjects. Her prudence was without craft, and her ambition unselfish. Literature and the arts she patronised; and, as she was able, she willingly employed her power for the promotion of knowledge. Few female sovereigns have ever exhibited a character of more complete loveliness, or left for the recording pen of history more decided proofs of a desire, wise, strong, and unfailing, for the welfare of her subjects, than the royal Isabella of Castile. The good she did was from herself, springing from her genuine benevolence; the mischief resulting from some of her proceedings was occasioned either by the mistakes of the age, or by the sad errors of her creed.

The period of the appearance of Columbus at the court of Ferdinand and Isabella was not favourable for his immediate success. The city was all alive with the bustle of military preparation. Spain was on the tiptoe of expectation; and the prospect of early success made every Spaniard anxious to comply with the wishes of the sovereigns, and to hasten to join their standard.

Cordova resembled a splendid camp. One subject engrossed all classes. All were waiting for the opening of the campaign which was, it was hoped, to free the Spanish soil from the footsteps of the infidel invaders, who were still regarded as foreigners. The war was a species of crusade, and even ecclesiastics believed it to be their duty to engage in it. Talavera was one of the clerical advisers of the queen, and was so occupied with these public duties that he had no leisure to attend to the applications of Columbus, or could give them only that superficial regard in which they would seem altogether visionary. Foreign discovery was, indeed, an exciting subject; but such was the character of the discoveries proposed by Columbus, that they required the close examination of principles, and attention to recondite arguments. Ferdinand himself headed the forces he had collected; and Isabella was not only deeply interested in all his movements, but during a part of the time she was present in the camp. Columbus, therefore, was still called to the exercise of patience; and it was one of the qualities of his great mind that he knew how to persevere and wait, where all might be ruined by undue haste. He saw that the proper opportunity had not yet arrived; and, therefore, during the summer and autumn of 1486 he remained at Cordova, doing what he *could*, as to do what he *would* was not yet in his power. His few wants he endeavoured to supply by making maps and charts.

Now that he thought himself to be on the eve of success, it pleased Providence that he should be severely tried by discouraging circumstances. He was a stranger, and he was poor; and for both reasons he found it difficult to gain access to those whom he wished to number among his converts. Few had the knowledge necessary to understand the principles on which his scheme was based; and among such a society as Cordova saw gathered within its walls, there would be many who, had they even been able to enter into the plans of one whom they would be only too ready to regard as a wandering adventurer, would be more likely to turn the whole into ridicule. Nor was he even permitted to remain unknown. He obtained the reputation with some of being a dreaming enthusiast, and with others of being a madman; the very children laughed at him as he passed along the streets. Severer moral discipline scarcely ever man passed through; but he was strong in personal conviction, and lived in the serenity of an entire self-possession. He exemplified, even in reference to his human confidence, the operations of a loftier faith; he believed, and he did not make haste. He would have been more than man had he not felt the shafts of ridicule; but he was unmoved by them.

Hitherto his reputation had been unshaded; but one circumstance occurred at Cordova, to say the least, questionable in its character. A mutual attachment was formed between himself and Doña

Beatriz Enriquez, a lady of a noble family in the city. The attachment had not the sanction of a formal and public marriage; but the doctrines of the ecclesiastical canonists allowed of binding contracts of marriage, and marriages private and irregular, but still valid. Whether the engagement had this inferior confirmation is not known; but he himself always treated Fernando, his son by this lady, in the same way that he treated Diego, his son by his former wife.

The perseverance of Columbus at length obtained its reward. Such was the power of his address, that when once he could obtain an attentive hearer, he seldom failed to secure a convert. His patient perseverance itself began to outlive ridicule, and to win success. Gradually, an impression was made, which slowly spread, that perhaps, after all, he was in the right. He might be called a visionary by those who knew him not; but those who had intercourse with him could not but acknowledge that his views were rational. The spreading of the light had commenced, and its progress was now rapid. The controller of the finances of Castile, Alonzo de Quintanilla, listened to him, became a warm advocate of his plans, and received him as his guest. He was allowed to lay his plans before Antonio Giraldini, the papal nuncio; and he, together with his brother, Alexander Giraldini, preceptor to the younger children of the king and queen, became his converts. He was by them enabled to take

what, visibly, was the most important step of all. They introduced him to the Archbishop of Toledo, Grand Cardinal of Spain, Pedro Gonzalez de Mendoza, who, from his influence with Ferdinand and Isabella, was sometimes called 'the third King of Spain.' He was a man of a strong and cultivated intellect, penetrating and active. He listened to the plans of Columbus, examined the arguments by which they were supported, and, yielding to conviction, saw at once that if they were indeed well founded, their importance was incalculable. He felt that an opportunity of acquiring unheard-of renown, if not wealth and empire, was brought within the reach of his sovereigns, and that it ought not to be rejected.

At length, therefore, Columbus obtained what he had so anxiously sought, a promise, on which he knew he could rely, of an audience with the royal personages who governed Spain. He believed that in this he was able to offer them what was of greater value than the present object of their most ardent desires. What was a small tract of land in southern Spain to the Indies, a new and shorter route to which he promised to show them, and to those as yet undiscovered countries in the parts of the world unknown to Europeans, on which he might, if permitted, plant the Spanish standard? Deep, if not somewhat superstitious, was the reverence with which sovereigns were, in those times, and especially in that country, regarded; but Columbus had so long

meditated on the discovery of a new world, the completion of the as yet imperfect map of the globe, that his own mind seemed to have dilated to the measure of his vast conceptions; and, feeling the true greatness of human nature, he felt that he could stand erect before kings, and present them the worthiest homage they can receive, not the servile adulation of the courtier and the slave, but the dignified respect of the free man. He was admitted to the audience, in which all his anxieties were for his cause, none for himself. In after days, speaking of this event, he said that he felt assisted from above, as an instrument for the accomplishment of the designs of Providence. By the interview Ferdinand was deeply impressed. He sufficiently understood human nature to perceive that no enthusiastic adventurer stood in his presence. He saw, also, that the arguments adduced by Columbus were more than plausible; that they had the strongest appearance of truth. And the idea of their possible truth being once admitted, his was precisely the mind to perceive its inestimable value. What were the discoveries which had shed such lustre on the crown of Portugal to those which might now be secured for Spain?

But Ferdinand was cautious. He gave orders to Fernando de Talavera,—to whom Columbus had at first been recommended, but from whom he only learned, and had yet to learn still more painfully, the vanity of human expectations,—to

assemble the learned geographers and astronomers of the kingdom, before whom Columbus was to repeat his statements and reasonings, and who, having carefully examined the whole case, were to present their report upon it. And as he was not to appear before ignorant and flippant courtiers, but before grave and learned men, interested, it might be supposed, in the glories of science, as well as in the honour of the sovereigns and their kingdom, from *their* report what was he to anticipate but support and encouragement? Alas! again was he to experience disappointment; again was his loyalty to his own solemn convictions of truth to be put to a test, which, as contrasted with the almost sanguine hopes he had thought himself justified in cherishing, would be felt by him as the severest of all.

CHAPTER VII.

COLUMBUS BEFORE THE COUNCIL AT SALAMANCA—SEEKS PATRONAGE AMONG THE SPANISH NOBILITY—RETURNS TO PALOS—RESUMES NEGOTIATIONS WITH THE SPANISH SOVEREIGNS.

THE council of inquiry into the theory and proposals of Columbus was appointed to be held at Salamanca, at that time considered as the principal seat of learning in Spain. The board was composed of some of the most learned men in the kingdom, civil and ecclesiastical. But the low state of science will be remembered, and its dependence rather on artificial reasonings than on the laws of truth, as ascertained by patient inquiry into fact. Hypothetical theories had not yet been dethroned by the *New Organ* of philosophising to which, in a subsequent age, attention was directed by Bacon. Partisanship in science was then as powerful and violent as now it is in politics. If Columbus was disappointed in the result of their deliberations, the account of it will now occasion no surprise. Few came to the conference without prepossessions; many were strongly influenced by prejudice. Columbus

stood alone in the comprehensiveness of his views. Of his judges perhaps all were narrow-minded, most of them bigoted. Talavera, too, by whom they had been convened, had at an earlier period neglected Columbus, and justified his neglect by the unqualified condemnation of the theory submitted to him; and many others felt their pride rebuked, that an obscure mariner should pretend to know what their penetration had not discovered. But Columbus knew too little of this to be dismayed by it; or, if it were suspected, he felt strong in the truth of his cause.

But he soon perceived the intrenchments which he must carry before he won the day. He was met by questions and objections which demonstrated that among his hearers there was no reigning love of truth for its own sake. Some actually denied the possibility of any inhabitants at the antipodes, as men could not live with their heads downwards! Some said that the plan was impracticable, because too much time would be required to sail such a distance as they supposed to exist; and others, that the heat of the torrid zone rendered it uninhabitable. Religion, too, was introduced. All men, it was said, were descended from Adam, and therefore to suppose inhabitants where Adam's children could never have travelled, was to contradict the Bible! All the arguments were of this nature. They partly arose, indeed, from imperfect information, and this was excusable; but they were urged with an

obstinacy totally inconsistent with allegiance to truth. The theory of Columbus did not originate in speculative hypotheses. It was theory in the legitimate sense of the term. Established principles were adduced, facts were collected, and the theory was the result of an induction more practically correct than any of the instances laid down even by Bacon, in connection with his *Novum Organum*. Had the principle of Bacon been as unsound as some of his illustrative instances,—as his *Inquiry into the Nature of Heat*,—the inductive philosophy would never have removed science from the rule of the Aristotelian logic.

The fault of these learned men consisted in their selfish obstinacy. With admirable patience, Columbus submitted to all their interrogatories, listened to all their objections; answered the first, and refuted the last. His reply to their arguments from Scripture was triumphant. He laid by his maps and charts, and descanted on the texts which promised such a glorious extension to the Church. He spoke, with the zeal of an enlightened Missionary, of the ends of the earth being commanded to look unto God, that they might be saved, and of the Divine name being great from the rising to the setting sun. His imagination glowed with the predicted prosperity of Zion,—predictions, the accomplishment of which such objections as he had heard would completely prevent, were they always to be adopted. Some of his

hearers were convinced, and among them a learned professor of theology at Salamanca, Diego de Deza, who afterwards became Archbishop of Seville. By his means some other learned men were gained; but the bulk were immovable. The board held several consultations among themselves, but came to no decision. At length, early in the spring of 1487, Talavera left Salamanca to join the court, and the council broke up, leaving the almost worn-out mariner in a state of the most painful suspense.

And in this state he had to spend several years. He followed, from time to time, the movements of the court, and was occasionally flattered with hopes of success. He still constructed maps and charts for his subsistence, though he was befriended by Diego de Deza, and was also sometimes a guest with Alonzo de Quintanilla. He was permitted, also, to attend the royal suite, and small sums were more than once granted for the purpose of defraying his expenses. He was become better known, and by many he was much respected; so that his circumstances were very different from those in which he stood as a mendicant at the gate of the convent of Palos. At length, in 1491, he pressed for a decisive reply; but the aspect of affairs was unfavourable. The war was not yet concluded, though the sovereigns were preparing for what proved to be the final campaign. The council were now ordered to meet, and give their ultimate report.

They did so; and Talavera, in their name, condemned the scheme as impracticable, and one unworthy the attention of the sovereigns, considering the weakness of the grounds on which it was professedly supported. In communicating this result, however, Ferdinand and Isabella informed Columbus that they did not finally reject his offer; but that, though the expenses of the war forbade them to engage for the present in any new enterprises, at its conclusion they would have leisure to re-consider the subject. He now gave up all hope of obtaining royal patronage, and left the court.

Thus closed the year 1491, and with it, for that time, his dependence on the sovereigns of Spain. But whither was he to go? His convictions had gathered strength by investigation. More firmly than ever did he believe in the existence of undiscovered regions; and more resolved than ever was he to be, if possible, their discoverer. He therefore looked round for patronage. He had favourable information from England and from France, and the King of Portugal had requested him to return. But he had now domestic ties again in Spain, and he directed his attention to some of the nobles of the country. The Duke of Medina Sidonia listened to him, but thought his views were too splendid to be true. With the Duke of Medina Celi he was for a time more successful. So strongly was he impressed with the representations that were

made to him, that he at length consented to employ a portion of his great wealth, together with three or four vessels that he had ready for sea in Port St. Mary, situated on one of his estates. Before he had finally decided, however, he remembered that the patronage he was about to accord had been refused by the court. Fearing to excite the royal jealousy, he withdrew his partially given consent, and again was Columbus disappointed. He now resolved upon quitting Spain, and repairing to Paris. For this purpose he returned to the convent at Palos, to remove his son Diego, whom he intended to take to Cordova, leaving him there with his other son, of course under the care of Doña Beatriz Enriquez, a circumstance that justifies the hope—a very natural one to all who understand the canonical law on the subject of marriage—that the connection was not an illegal one. As the law then was, a marriage might be formally irregular in the judgment of the Church, which yet was so far valid in the judgment of law, as that it would have absolutely prevented every other engagement, on the ground of pre-contract, although the issue would not be regarded as legitimate.

Columbus returned to Palos apparently with fewer hopes of success than those with which he had left it for Cordova in the spring of 1486; and already had the year 1492, the most memorable in the history of his own life, and ever memorable in the history of the world, opened upon him.

No more faithful friend had he than the friar, Juan Perez de Marchena, who had at first noticed him at his meal of bread and water, the provision of Christian charity. Six years had elapsed. Columbus had submitted his plans to royalty, and had argued them with the learned. All seemed to be in vain. He had returned whence he set out, for the purpose of making his final arrangements, and offering to another country the glories and advantages which Spain appeared to have rejected. The patriotism of the good friar was alarmed. To him, the plans of Columbus had become an incontrovertible fact, and he could not bear to think that his own country should lose the whole of what he deemed to be the certain glory and advantage. He persuaded Columbus to delay yet a little longer, while he himself would make a final effort. Isabella he knew, as he had been her confessor; and he believed that if the subject were laid before her, fully and seriously, it would receive her approbation. He wrote to her, therefore, earnestly imploring her to permit Columbus to detail his projects in her own presence, calling her attention, not only to the additional honour that would result from adding countries not yet discovered to the empire of Spain, now for the first time, by the conquest of the Moors, restored, after ages of divided rule, to its original integrity, but likewise to that which would shine on the Church, by its extension among multitudes of pagans. Sebastian Rodriguez, a pilot, residing

in the neighbourhood, was chosen to be the bearer of this letter to the queen. So faithfully did he acquit himself, that in fourteen days he returned with an order for the good friar to repair immediately to the court, and represent to her the case, while Columbus himself was to continue at the convent till further intelligence was received.

And, for the honour of Spain, the tide of affairs had not turned too soon. Bartholomew Columbus had sailed for England, to lay his brother's projects before Henry VII.; but fell in with pirates on his passage, who robbed him of all that he possessed, so that he arrived in England in a state of complete poverty, and for some time lived in obscurity, earning a scanty livelihood as Christopher had done by constructing maps and charts for the use of navigators. In 1489 he presented a map of the world to the king; and, though he had to pass through a long ordeal of contempt and neglect, ultimately so ingratiated himself with the calculating monarch, that he was commissioned to invite his brother to repair to London. But Henry was too late. Columbus had sailed before the tardy message arrived in Spain.

The Friar Marchena, on receiving the queen's letter from Santa Fé, lost no time in obeying it. He soon obtained admission to Isabella, and stated the views of Columbus with such earnestness, that she at once ordered his attendance, that she might judge of his plans after hearing them more particularly described by his own lips. And, with

provident generosity, she directed that a sum of money should be sent to him to defray his necessary expenses. He arrived at the city camp (for such was Santa Fé) in time to witness the close of Moorish dominion in Spain in the surrender of Granada. From the Alhambra, Boabdil el Chico, the last of the Mohammedan monarchs, mournfully proceeded to deliver up the keys of the city to Ferdinand and his consort, now the rulers of entire Spain. Never had such a triumph been known in the kingdom. From the monarchs to their lowest subject, the whole multitude was moved by the enthusiasm of patriotism and religion And Columbus was present. It is said that he alone appeared to be unmoved by the general impulse. And no wonder. So long had he contemplated the idea of the discovery of a new world, that it had become, as it were, a portion of his own being. Before his imagination prospects arose, magnificent even when most vague; and a mind like his could not have dwelt so much on it without those occasional exercises of the fancy which would disperse the clouds, or fill them with the gorgeous hues of sunset. And to the man who had such illimitable scenes before him, what would be one single city, with whatever splendid associations it might be connected? The heart of Columbus was not there. In the midst of that brilliant throng, he was alone: with one grand conception he had become familiar, and no one shared it with him. It was as though all his

thoughts were embodied in words which none understood but himself, so that none could hold communion with him. All Spain was rejoicing in the acquisition of a small slip of territory in her own borders: he was persuaded that he could open the way to unknown empires beyond what hitherto had proved the impassable ocean. The visionary stood alone, his whole soul pervaded by the conviction that his visions were glorious realities.

Granada was conquered. The affair of Columbus was laid officially before the monarchs. Persons were appointed to negotiate with him. But new difficulties arose. Columbus proposed two principal conditions: that he should be admiral of the seas, and viceroy of the countries he should discover; and that he should have one-tenth of all gains. He offered to defray an eighth part of the expense, provided, also, that he should have additionally, a like share of the profits. The first stipulation seems to have been necessary both for his honour and power. Nearly the same privileges had been granted by the court of Lisbon to the discoverers of the islands which had been added to their crown; and there was already an officer in Spain, with the title of Admiral of Castile, the office itself being above a century old. Columbus requested letters patent in similar form, conferring the same title and office as to the seas and countries which he might discover. And surely one-tenth of the gain, leaving nine-tenths

for the sovereign, whose would be all the real empire likewise, was not too munificent a reward. But his old opponent, Ferdinand de Talavera, now Archbishop of the new Spanish city of Granada, was the principal person in the commission, and his terms were finally pronounced inadmissible. He refused to make the least concession. His plans with him were certainties; and therefore, renouncing all further hope from Spain, he again resolved to leave the country, and made immediate preparations for departure from the court.

He had three friends, however, who now fully entered into his plans. This final rejection filled them with grief, and they resolved again to appeal to Isabella in person. The hospitable friar of Rabida was one; the other two, Alonzo de Quintanilla, and Luis de St. Angel, the last a skilful financier, and Queen Isabella's controller. They told her that the loss on failure would be comparatively trifling; the gain of success incalculable. They appealed to her religious feelings and sense of honour. She was so moved, that she declared she would undertake the enterprise for her own crown of Castile, and would, if necessary, pledge her royal jewels for the expenses. She made the decision, and became the patroness of the discovery of the new world.

CHAPTER VIII.

COLUMBUS SUMMONED TO THE PRESENCE OF ISABELLA —ARRANGEMENT WITH THE SOVEREIGNS—PREPARATIONS FOR THE EXPEDITION.

IN the meantime, the preparations of Columbus were completed, and he had already left Granada on his way to Cordova, intending to proceed thence to France, where he resolved to renew his offers. He had crossed the *vega* of Granada, and was two leagues from the city, when he was overtaken by the courier, who had been sent to request his return. For a short time he paused. No wonder that he hesitated. He might almost have seen, in this relentless opposition, reluctantly yielding to the noble spirit of Isabella, the seeds whence bitter fruit might ultimately grow. Still, so dear was the object, and so uncertain success elsewhere, that, after brief but natural hesitation, and confiding in the pledged word of the queen, he consented to retrace his steps.

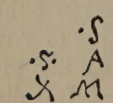
Isabella, having once resolved, entered into the scheme with an ardent zeal which might have been expected from a nature like hers, allowing itself steadily and fully to *envisage* a subject so

truly magnificent as that now placed before her. It related to the discovery of a new world, and the extension of the Christian faith; and now that at length she understood what this Genoese navigator proposed, and perceived the probable foundation on which his plans rested, she saw how much more likely was success than failure, and how bright and imperishable the glory which success would give to the joint reign of herself and husband. As soon, therefore, as Columbus had returned to Santa Fé, he was called to her presence, and required himself to state all his opinions and wishes,—for this time, after so many tantalising delays, before a willing auditor. The warmth of Isabella was strongly contrasted with the calculating craftiness of Ferdinand; but in her well-regulated mind, warmth was real power. She had resolved that the requisite funds should be supplied from her own revenues of Castile; at the same time, in this instance, as in every other during her reign, she was careful that in public, and in all official proceedings, the King of Arragon should be associated with her. All was to be done in the name of 'Ferdinand and Isabella;' and now that his queen had undertaken to defray the expense, and had even taken upon herself the real responsibility of the whole, the sagacious monarch no longer objected to an enterprise, in the failure of which he would incur neither disgrace nor loss, but from whose success he was sure to derive both honour and profit. Columbus had

now to negotiate with officers who had been directed to draw up the agreements between himself and the sovereigns; and, as Isabella was anxious that no time should be lost, but that the voyage should commence before autumn had to yield to winter, the period of delay was past, and the heart of the bold veteran already beat high in the sure prospect of the resolution of his doubts: he believed that that resolution would be the triumphant confirmation of all his anticipations.

With a reluctance on the part of the agents of Ferdinand which would have justified Columbus in the fear that when he had to look for the fulfilment of the promises made to him vexatious difficulties would be dishonourably interposed, the documents which he required were at length signed.* By this instrument it was agreed:—

1. Columbus and his heirs to be the King's admirals in all the parts discovered by him 'dur-



* In the Middle Ages the Spaniards, to distinguish themselves from the Moors and Jews, then so numerous in Spain, placed before their names the initials of a passage of Scripture or of their patron saint.

Chroferens signifies Christopher; the letters X, M, Y appear to stand for Christus, Maria, Josephus (Joseph or Jesus). The S at the top may be the initial of Sancta (Maria). The S, A, S in the second line are more difficult to explain, possibly for Salve, Ave, Sanctus. They make seven letters, seven being generally considered a sacred number.

ing his natural life,' 'with all the pre-eminences and prerogatives which belong to the said office, in the same manner as possessed by Don Alfonso Enriquez, High Admiral of Castile;' 2. To be 'Viceroy and Governor-general over all the said islands, continents, &c., with the power of naming' for each separate government, three persons, one of whom the king was to select and appoint; 3. to have the tenth part of the profits remaining, after all expenses had been paid, the other nine being for the sovereigns; 4. To be judge in the courts necessary for inquiring into questions respecting merchandise, &c.; and, 5. To be permitted to contribute an eighth share of the expenses of equipment, and to take an eighth share of the gain.—'Granted, in the town of Santa Fé, in the plain of Granada, the seventeenth day of April, in the year of the nativity of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, one thousand, four hundred, and ninety-two.—I THE KING.—I THE QUEEN.'

Preparations had now to be made for the expedition itself. Palos, with which and its neighbourhood Columbus was so connected, was bound, by some charter or law, to serve the crown with two armed caravels, for three months in the year. Ferdinand, with his usual thrift, fixed on these as his share, and ordered them to be got ready without loss of time. The third vessel was equipped by Columbus, through the assistance of his friends, at his own expense. While he remained at court, Isabella afforded him a striking and very encour-

THE CARAVEL OF COLUMBUS.

Facsimile of a Wood Engraving of 1493, *from a design by Columbus himself.*

aging mark of her favour. His son Diego was appointed page to Prince Juan, the heir apparent. This was an honour which had hitherto only been granted to the sons of persons of high rank; but the queen had a kind heart, and knew how gratified the father would be in leaving his son under such patronage: her judgment, usually correct and far-seeing, may likewise have had something to do with this appointment; as she would reflect, that should the enterprising parent prove successful, according to the terms of the agreement, himself and heirs would be called to high office and rank, and that by this position at court, young Diego would be, in fact, undergoing a training which subsequently would be found to have been necessary for him. On the 12th of May, all being finished that had to be done at court, Columbus left it, directing his steps now towards the harbour from which he hoped soon to sail for the discovery of the second half of the world. He was fifty-six years of age; and for nearly twenty, his mind had been fixed on one object. If he were past the vigour of life as to age, yet his constitution was sound, and had never been injured by excess. Powerful in frame, he was likewise mature in judgment, conscious of superiority, exercising command almost as a right, dignified, and yet affable, so self-possessed, that by no event was he to be surprised, and so self-controlled, that he was always well able to govern others.

At Palos, however, he found that if obstruc-

tions were removed out of the way, the way itself was rough, presenting a *friction* which, though it could not prevent, greatly impeded all his movements. While an expedition to traverse unknown seas was only a scheme in the mind of an individual, and a few friends whom he had persuaded that it was a good one, all was quiet. Everybody could calmly look at that which interfered with nobody. In a small seaport it would furnish a novel topic for both reasonable discourse and idle gossip. But all this quietness had to be disturbed. When Columbus arrived at the convent, his good friend the prior received him with exultation. Their object was gained. Preparations for the speedy commencement of the actual voyage had to be made. It would not be easy to conceive the feelings with which Columbus and the prior would grasp each other's hand. Six years before, the first, with his youthful son, the companion of his homeless wanderings, had stood at the convent gate, a mendicant, for the refreshment of bread and water; and the second had been struck by his appearance, and by conversation with him had learned his plans. The six years had been replete with anxiety and disappointment. But they are gone, and their cares! The youth is high in office at court. The father is about to begin one of the most momentous undertakings ever conceived by man.

We may be sure, that as soon as mutual congratulations had been exchanged, work would

commence. And so it was. The friends procured a notary, proceeded to Palos, called the authorities and inhabitants to assemble in the parish church of St. George, and there publicly read the royal order for the equipment of the caravels, and their employment on this discovery-voyage as soon as all was ready. The people were astonished; and to astonishment fear, and even terror, soon succeeded. Of persons actually engaged in such a voyage they had never heard. Every conceivable danger that ignorance and superstition could suggest was imagined. Alarm spread from family to family, from heart to heart, and increased by communication. Palos was a nursery of seamen. Many a bold youth was there, many a hardy and experienced veteran. But youth and veteran alike shrank from the perilous enterprise. Orders came from the sovereigns to impress into the service the number of seamen required; but these could not be carried into effect. Commotions and tumults ensued; and Columbus, just when he thought that all was gained, stood for a time in doubt whether he should not be obliged, after all, to desist. Who would undertake a voyage, from which, it was said, neither vessels nor seamen would return?

Just at this time, the wealthy navigator whom Columbus, some years before, had succeeded in convincing, boldly came forwards, and, together with his brother, Vincente Yañez Pinzon, not only declared their approval of the voyage, but offered

themselves to accompany it, with two of their own vessels. Their example was effectual; the vessels were soon manned, and the process of storing them rapidly proceeded. The greatest difficulties were connected with the third vessel, which had been pressed into the service. The repairs needed were so imperfectly performed, that they had to be done over again. The workmen absconded, and scarcely could their place be supplied. To the very last moment had Columbus to combat with difficulties, and surmount obstructions. But he was invincible. With mingled firmness and patience he went onwards till the long-desired moment arrived in which he could say, 'All is ready!' This was in the beginning of August.

And what was the 'fleet' provided for this great expedition? Three vessels, only one of which was completely decked! The other two were little more than the river and coasting barks of our own time. These caravels, as they were termed, were built high at the prow and stern, with forecastles and cabins for the crew; but the centres were not decked. The decked vessel was called the *Santa Maria*, and carried Columbus and the admiral's flag. One of the caravels, the *Pinta*, was commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon; and the other, the *Niña*, by his brother, Vincente Yañez. Francisco Martin Pinzon, another brother, sailed with Alonzo as his mate. Garcia Fernandez, the physician of Palos, sailed with Vincente. They had also three able pilots

on board, whose names deserve a record: Sancho Ruiz, Pedro Alonzo Niño, and Bartholomew Roldan. The total number of persons was one hundred and twenty.

Unhappily, as the moment of departure approached, the gloom of the whole community was increased. Perhaps this was not unnatural. It could not be expected that Columbus, so far in advance of the age, should be able to bring the rest to share in his own views and feelings. The relations and friends of all parties concerned expressed their persuasion that the separation would be a final one; and the grief they indulged spread from them to the crews.

The last act of Columbus was in accordance with general custom. Towards the conclusion of the day before that on which the voyage was to commence, he, and all his companions, attended mass, confessing themselves, and receiving absolution, according to the discipline of the Church of Rome. This was August 2nd, 1492.

CHAPTER IX.

DEPARTURE FROM PALOS — EVENTS OF THE FIRST VOYAGE—DISCOVERY OF LAND.

EARLY in the morning of the 3rd of August, 1492, almost all the inhabitants of a small seaport on the south-west coast of Spain, were gathered together to see three vessels, containing one hundred and twenty persons, for the most part belonging to Palos and its neighbourhood, sail out of the harbour. On shore, there were few who were not filled with grief, being persuaded that their relations and friends who were on board would return no more. By the

THE CARAVELS OF COLUMBUS.

lamentations of those who were to be left the minds of those who were leaving were painfully affected; their spirits were depressed, their fears excited, and could they have abandoned the voyage, they would have done so. There was, however, one man who, though not unaffected by what he saw, was yet, in regard to his high enterprise, unmoved. The period had arrived which he had long desired, long sought. He did all that he could to communicate something of his own feeling to those whom he regarded as his companions in the prosecution of a glorious work. As the vessels slowly moved along, while the crews were looking shorewards, and repeating their signs of farewell to their friends, Columbus was looking oceanwards, his thoughts travelling in their swift flight far beyond that horizon-line where sea and sky seemed to meet, and exulting already in the anticipation of the new shores which he hoped, ere long, to behold, and from which he trusted to return in triumph, spreading joy where now was so much sorrow. The vessels were first steered to the south-west. It was his intention to proceed to the Canary Islands, and thence take his real departure on his voyage of discovery. Only on the third day after leaving port his troubles began. A signal was made from the *Pinta*, that her rudder was broken, and had become unserviceable. It was feared that this was no accident; but that her disaffected owners had purposely occasioned it, that the disabled vessel

might have to return. Even the crews of the other vessels (for those were days of superstition, and sailors are never less superstitions than those of their own class among landsmen) regarded the event as an omen of misfortune, a sign of bad luck; and it required all the energy of the admiral to induce them to proceed. They soon reached the Canaries; and for two or three weeks Columbus cruised among the islands in search of a vessel which he might take instead of the *Pinta*. To add to his vexations, he heard that three Portuguese vessels had been seen hovering to the westward. He feared that these had been detached for the purpose of intercepting his little fleet, and putting a stop to his voyage.

Finding no other vessel, the *Pinta* was repaired, and all the vessels well stored and fitted for the voyage, which was now really to begin. Among the Canaries, the sailors scarcely felt themselves separated from home. He was anxious, therefore, that the prow of his vessel should be furrowing the ocean beyond. He endeavoured to put to sea on the 6th of September; but for three days a tedious calm kept them close by land. In the night of the 8th, the wind freshened a little; and at sunrise he saw behind him, some twenty miles distant, the most westerly of the Canaries, the small island of Ferro. The sea was clear all around him, to his great joy; for he dreaded most of all the appearance of the Portuguese vessels. As the day advanced, the wind increased,

and continued fair; so that the land astern—how many wishful eyes would on that 9th day of September be regarding it!—gradually diminished and faded, till night finally hid it from view; and on the morning of the 10th of September, land was no longer in sight. The voyage was begun!

But this, which so gladdened the noble heart of the admiral, affected the sailors so much, that many of them even shed tears. What they had left, they knew; but where were they going? what would they find? It was the great object of Columbus to keep them occupied, and to animate them by the prospects which were present to his own vision. Still, though he had no distrust, there would be moments when he must feel that his views were not absolutely certain. Cheerful to others, the inner man could not but be serious, even to solemnity, if not occasionally anxious. But all this was his own secret. With powerful self-control, he commanded his very features, and for some days onward and onward went the ships, impelled by the favouring breeze, leaving the old world behind, hastening to behold the new.

It is somewhat singular that the line on which he sailed was one which protracted discovery. Had he sailed from the Azores instead of the Canaries, and held on due west, several days before he saw one of the small Bahamas he would have entered the noble Chesapeake, on that great continent which bears the name of one not truly

its discoverer. Had his course even from the Canaries been steered a few points to the south, he would have seen the Antilles, which he passed to the northward, out of sight, some days before he actually made land. But in his circumstances, he thought it best to keep uniformly to the west.

By splendid descriptions, appealing to their imagination, by splendid promises, appealing to their desire of riches, and sometimes by reasoning with them on the facts and principles of the case, he sought to keep his men in good humour. Thus far he was right, for he himself fully believed all that he said. One deception, however, he practised, which, because it was a deception, was unworthy of his courage. He kept the reckoning of the fleet himself; and while one paper, for his own use, marked the true rate of sailing, a second, for his little public, exhibited a much slower advance. He did not wish his crew to know how far they had sailed.

And troubles soon began. Before they had left Ferro a week, they passed a large mast floating on the water, looking like part of a wreck. This, too, the sailors considered as ominous. But, in a few days, for a short time even his own mind was troubled. He observed, for the first time, the variation of the needle,—its deflection from the true north point, as indicated by the polar star. The pilots, also, soon perceived it, and for a time the alarm was great and general. It was apprehended that they were approaching a part

of the world where they would no longer find the same natural laws in operation. He was obliged to explain the matter as well as he could; and his high reputation as an astronomer stood him in good stead. Before long, the little fleet had entered the 'trade wind,' which there blows steadily from east to west. The sea was smooth, the weather serene, and they were wafted rapidly along, for many days not shifting a sail. Signs of land, too, as Columbus hoped they would prove, began to appear. Patches of herbs and weeds were seen drifting from the west, some of them appearing quite fresh; and on one of them was a live crab. New kinds of birds were seen; some of them evidently land-birds. Every eye now was directed westward. A pension of thirty crowns had been promised to the person first discovering land. Columbus frequently sounded, with a two-hundred-foot line; but no bottom had yet been found.

But, though thus occasionally inspirited, the sailors began to fear that they were advancing so far, that return would be impracticable. The wind blew *from* the east: how were they to sail *towards* the east, back again? Then, again, were they cheered by the morning visits of little singing-birds, which left them at night, coming from the west, and returning in the same direction. Still, as they went onward, onward, onward, and nothing but sea and sky, their hearts again failed them. One day there was a dead calm, and they

feared they had entered a region where the winds had ceased to blow. Their minds were in such a state that every trifle affected them. Their murmurs increased, and at length, among some, began to assume the form of resistance to the admiral's authority. He himself had reckoned, that at a distance of seven hundred and fifty leagues they would find land. They had sailed thus far, but no land had been seen.

On the 7th of October, many land-birds came to them from the south-west; and appearances in that direction were such that he consented to turn his vessel's head from the line which hitherto it had traced. Had he not done so land might have been found a day or two later; but it would have been the continent, where it is now called Florida. But his crews were almost in a state of mutiny. Three days they continued in this direction; and when the sun went down, on the 10th of October, no land appeared on the horizon. It was with the utmost difficulty, by threats and persuasions, by mingled authority and kindness, that he induced them to continue their course till another day should enlighten the scene. On that day, October 11th, in its earlier portion, evident were the indications that, somewhere, land was very near them. A fish, known to dwell in water among rocks, passed them; *a branch, with berries on it, was seen floating;* also a reed, a piece of board—wood evidently *cut;* and, soon after, a carved stick. Not only was land near, but land

COLUMBUS FIRST SIGHTING THE NEW WORLD.

on which was man. What a day would that be for every one on board, but most of all for the 'admiral'! Curiosity there would be in all; in him the curiosity of science. But the sun went down, and still no land! Murmurs, however, had subsided; they were in the vicinity of land, and the question was, 'Who shall see it first?' And this would be, not from natural curiosity alone, but from the hope of the pension of thirty crowns.

Vespers had been sung. Columbus had addressed his crew. He told them he believed they would make land that very night, and exhorted all to be on the 'look out.' He took his own station on the highest part of the forecastle; and as the darkness closed around him, his eye sought to penetrate the veil for the slightest indication of the long-desired object. To him the moments would pass slowly, for anxiety was at its height. The *Pinta* was a short distance a-head; from her, therefore, the first signal might be expected. But he who first conceived the idea first witnessed its realisation. About ten at night, he thought he perceived a light at a great distance. He looked again. It appeared to move, as if lifted up and down, and then as if a person were walking with it. Dreading the effect of disappointment on the crew, he called one of his officers up to him, Pedro Gutierrez. He, too, saw it. He then called Rodrigo Sanchez, who just saw it as it disappeared. Twice or thrice afterwards, however, it appeared again; and though land itself

could not be seen, the token that there *was* land, and inhabited land, had been given, and first seen by Columbus.

While they were watching,—and there would be no sleep that night,—two in the morning had arrived. A gun was fired from the *Pinta*. It was the signal agreed upon. From that vessel Rodriguez Bermejo, a sailor from Seville, had seen that they were approaching land. All now was joyous expectation. The hitherto unpassed ocean had been crossed. Though shrouded by darkness, land was before them; and in very few hours day would show them what it was. Diligent scientific research, untiring industry and patience, unconquerable perseverance, were about to be rewarded. COLUMBUS WAS THE DISCOVERER OF THE NEW WORLD.

CHAPTER X.

FIRST LANDING OF COLUMBUS IN THE NEW WORLD—INTERCOURSE WITH THE NATIVES—REMARKS UPON SLAVERY.

IN the conclusions at which Columbus had arrived, the existence of another continent had no place. He expected that Asia extended far to the eastward from India; and to the eastward of its farthest coast, he expected to find a large island, with rich and warlike inhabitants. Vague reports in those days had reached Europe concerning Japan, or, as Columbus termed it, *Cipango*. Whether this were the island, or whether it were the Asiatic continent, he knew not. At length day broke, and soon all became visible. A beautiful island was before these intrepid navigators. It was almost covered by verdant forests, and the herbage appeared most luxuriant. All were anxious to go on shore. By sunrise the admiral was ready, clothed in a splendid scarlet uniform. The two Pinzons likewise entered their boats. All were accompanied by armed men, and carried the banners of Castile and Arragon. The inhabitants were seen running about in great numbers; but the state of nudity

in which they lived proved at once that there was no Asiatic civilisation among them.

Columbus landed, took possession of the country in the name of their Spanish majesties, had himself proclaimed viceroy, and received the oaths of subjection from his followers, who were now as excited by joy as before they had been dejected by grief and despair. The most mutinous fell at his feet, craving pardon. All promised obedience, and few neglected to solicit favours. The inhabitants, meanwhile, were all astonishment and alarm. At daybreak they had seen the vessels, and supposed them to be monsters with wings, especially when they saw them, as it were, self-moved by the sails. When the party landed, they saw beings of a new race, and at first fled to the woods; but after a time they became assured, and, with all the confidence of their unknowing simplicity, mingled freely with their visitors. Their skins were fancifully painted, but their original complexion was copper-coloured. For arms they had only lances, the point being hardened by fire, or having some fish-bone fastened there. Of iron they appeared to have no knowledge. Articles for gift or traffic were of the most simple character. Some of them, however, had ornaments of gold about them. The Spaniards, as well as they could, eagerly inquired where they had been obtained; and, as well as they could understand the signs, gathered that the region for gold was to the south-west.

Columbus had landed on an island belonging to the group now named 'the Bahamas.' If a map be examined, it will be seen, that if he had pursued a course in a somewhat more southerly direction, he would much sooner have fallen in with land. He landed at what is now the island of St. Salvador, which is in about 24° north latitude, and 76° west longitude. Supposing his vessel to have been, some given day, in 18° 30′ north latitude, and about 61° west longitude, he would have been immediately to the north of the Antilles, and, sailing directly south, he would have come to Barbuda, Antigua, Dominica, Martinico, St. Vincent, or Barbadoes (a little to the east), and so on to Tobago, Trinidad, and the southern continent, about the mouths of the vast 'Orinoco.' On the other hand, if he had not deviated from his directly westerly course (by which deviation he was brought to St. Salvador), he would either have come, about the same time, to Eleuthera, or New Providence; or, had he been a little to the north, and passed them in the night to the 'larboard' (or left), as the sailors say, in two or three days at furthest he might have run the prow of his vessel on the southern point of the North American continent, somewhere on the coast of what is now called Florida, and left not even the shadow of a reason for giving to the new world the name which it now bears from a later voyager, whose name is Latinised to Americus Vespuccius. If ever man deserved that his memory should be

preserved in the denomination of any land in this globe of ours, that man was Christopher Columbus, and AMERICA should have been COLUMBIA.

The next morning the natives, who appear to have apprehended no danger from the strangers, visited the ships, some by swimming, others in vessels formed from the trunk of a single tree, hollowed out, which they called canoes, and which were, some of them, capable of containing forty or fifty persons. It was soon found that here, at all events, the dreams which many had entertained, and from which Columbus himself had not been free, that regions of great wealth would be reached, by the discovery of which riches might speedily be secured, were not likely to be realised. Columbus had thought of reaching the eastern extremity of the old continent of Asia, where a civilised and wealthy people, as in India, would be found; but the simple islanders of the Western Indies (as the new discoveries, collectively, were soon named) were altogether different from the Hindoos or Chinese. And, eventually, most melancholy was the result. Many of the companions of Columbus in his first voyage, and still more in those which he subsequently made, were

animated by the eager and ignorant cupidity of the day. They were men who wanted to 'make haste to be rich.' Unacquainted with the true principles of commerce, and too impatient in their desires for wealth to be contented with the golden egg daily,—according to the old fable,—they wanted to be rich at once; not by the cultivation of the land, and by the establishment of new markets for home manufactures, and the introduction of new articles of commerce into their native country, and from Spain into Europe generally, but by the immediate possession of the more costly articles, especially of the precious metals.

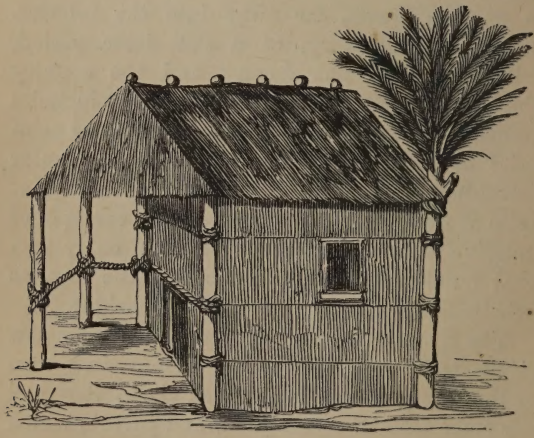
All these expectations were disappointed, till Mexico was discovered and conquered, some years afterwards, by Fernando Cortes, and, subsequently, Peru, by Francisco Pizarro. The results soon were fatal to the inhabitants. Disappointed in their expectations of immediate wealth, the Spaniards, though unable to gratify their avarice, could indulge their indolence, and the natives were soon compelled to become their servants. The consequence was, that, worn out by a toil for which their previous habits had unfitted them, and which their few wants did not require,—as, indeed, the nature of the climate did not allow it,—they gradually melted away, so that their diminished and diminishing numbers became insufficient for the cultivation of the land.

Then a remedy, if possible, worse than the dis-

ease, was employed. A hardier race was judged to be necessary; and before the aborigines had disappeared,—which was the case in no long space of time,—the importation of negroes from Africa laid the foundation of the guilty systems of the African slave-trade, and West Indian and American slavery. The slave-trade (though, within the memory of many now living, Britain withdrew from all participation in this traffic of blood, and became its decided opponent) still exists, and is a mighty barrier to the civilisation of Africa, from its western coasts, far away into the interior. West Indian slavery, at a still later period, Britain likewise put down; and the country which glories that its mixed government includes a monarchy, representing and preserving the principles of order and law, as well as a popular assembly, representing and preserving the principles of liberty,—that country set the example of declaring that all her subjects should enjoy personal freedom, and equality before the law, as their inalienable and more sacred birthright.

The Spaniards soon discovered that their new friends had very little to offer them. In return for the trinkets that were given them, they had only some balls of cotton yarn, and parrots which they had tamed. They wore, however, small ornaments of gold in their noses; and when asked whence these came, they pointed to the south, and intimated that the people there were warlike, and that from the north-west, also, they were

sometimes invaded, and the captives taken away as slaves. Columbus thought this must be the Asia of his imaginings, and resolving to pursue his discoveries, found no difficulty now in persuading his men to concur in his resolution. After brief repose, therefore, he left the island, directing his course towards the south, and taking with him several of the inhabitants, that they might learn Spanish, and be their interpreters in other places.



NATIVE HOUSE.

CHAPTER XI.

CRUISE AMONG THE BAHAMAS — DISCOVERY OF CUBA AND HISPANIOLA — COASTING OF HISPANIOLA — SHIPWRECK AND OTHER INCIDENTS AT THE ISLAND —RETURN VOYAGE—LANDS AT LISBON—ARRIVAL AT PALOS.

IN some sense it might be said that the voyage of discovery was now finished; henceforward it was to be one of exploration. For some time it was most delightful: every object was new, the toils and apprehensions of the outward voyage were over, and pleasing certainty had displaced alarming doubt. Novelty, always most gratifying in its first stages, was the more so to the Spaniards, not only from its contrast with the dark and distressing past, nor even from the pleasantness of the objects which it exhibited, but from the character which all those objects sustained, as not only being seen for the first time by them, but for the first time by any Europeans. It is scarcely possible to conceive of a temper more prepared for delight than that of the crews of Columbus for the first few days after the grand discovery had been made by them. The long-agitated problem was solved, and solved by them-

selves. Every bosom would swell at the thoughts of returning home, and telling to their anxious, if not despairing, friends the wonderful tale of their success. Each sailor would feel that at home, in his own circle, he would be a hero. He would be able to speak to them, not merely of lands which he had seen and they had not,—and this is still one of the greatest pleasures of the returned traveller,—but of lands of which he had not heard till he saw them, nor they till he told them. None could feel this in as high a degree as Columbus himself, but it would be felt by all; and as nothing adverse had as yet occurred, all would be disposed to be pleased.

For several days they sailed from island to island; but even while sailing, and looking out for land with expectation no longer mingled with anxiety, the sea over which they were passing was continually affording gratification. The weather was serene, the sky bright, the ocean smooth, for they had seen it hitherto in only one of its tropical aspects. No hurricane had been witnessed by them, driving everything before its power, and raising the gentle heaving of the water into mountainous waves. Below the glassy surface new kinds of fish, many of them beautiful and splendid in their hues, were continually sporting. The island landscapes, likewise, presented every variety of loveliness. The verdant plains, the wooded hills, the dense foliage of the forests, in which, too, were many species of trees

heretofore unknown, and which Columbus conjectured might prove of great value in Spain, both for dyeing and medicine, all contributed to recompense and recruit the weary and exhausted voyagers; and, perhaps, never men enjoyed a larger quantity of the purest physical pleasure than did Columbus and his sailors for the remainder of the October that had commenced so fearfully, but had so soon afforded such happy auspices.

As they proceeded slowly towards the south, and island after island met their view, at each the inquiry was, Whether gold or spices were found there? The answer was always the same; but the farther south they sailed, the more definite became the reports concerning a large country to be found in that direction. At length, on the 28th of October, they came in sight of Cuba. This noble island, though very narrow, scarcely ever a hundred and fifty miles from sea to sea, and sometimes much less, extends, in a diagonal direction, from north-west, where its highest latitude is 23°, to south-east, where it is not quite 20°, not less than eight hundred miles. Columbus made the land on the north side, about a third of the distance from its lowest extremity, towards its higher one. He was deeply impressed with the magnificent views of the plains, and valleys, and lofty mountains of the island. He sailed along the coast slowly towards the north, and began at length to believe he had reached continental Asia.

VIEW IN ISLE OF CUBA.

At one place, hearing of a great prince in the interior, he thought they were talking of Cublay-Khan, of Tartary, and sent a deputation to him, with presents from the Spanish sovereigns. One who was sent was a converted Jew, who was acquainted with Hebrew and the Chaldaic and Arabic tongues. They penetrated about twelve leagues into the island, and then came to a village with fifty houses, and about a thousand inhabitants; but nothing was there to indicate what these ambassadors sought. The learned languages were of no avail, and their Indian interpreter had to be employed. They were received with great kindness; but they saw no marks either of an advanced state of society or of the possession of wealth. The population was thin, and the land very partially and rudely cultivated.

On their return, however, they were much struck by what they observed to be a common practice. Certain dried leaves of a herb were rolled up so as to form a tight roll rather larger than a finger. One end of this was lit, and the other put into the mouth, that the smoke might first be drawn up, and then puffed out. This was not very far from what is now the chief city of the island, Havannah. To these little rolls the natives gave the name of 'tobacco,' a name which has since been transferred to the weed itself from the leaves of which the inhabitants made the rolls; and this was evidently their primitive manner of using it.

Columbus was satisfied that such a people as he sought was not to be found in Cuba. He, however, kept coasting till, had he proceeded much farther, he would have arrived at the most westerly point of the island, now Cape St. Antonio, whence across to Yucatan, on the opposite shores of Mexico, is not much above a hundred miles. But he here heard that not far from the eastern point of Cuba was a large island, where, though the people were very warlike (some said they had only one eye), they had plenty of gold. Columbus now resolved to coast back to the south-east, though uncertain whether Cuba was island or continent.

Soon after he turned back, however, a most untoward event occurred. The *Pinta*, commanded by Martin Alonzo Pinzon, was the best sailer; and being considerably ahead, Columbus made signals to him to shorten sail, to which the captain paid no attention. These were repeated during the night by lights at the mast-head; but in the morning the vessel was no longer to be seen. It afterwards appeared that Pinzon had heard of this land to the eastward, where gold abounded, and that he and his crew had resolved to sail directly for it, and secure its advantages for themselves. Columbus deeply felt the desertion, but continued his own coasting course, and at length arrived at the eastern end of the island, around which he sailed for a little distance. But one day, taking a rather wider offing than usual,

he perceived high mountains in the horizon to the south-east. He immediately made sail in that direction; and soon arrived at the island long called Hispaniola, now generally known under the names of St. Domingo and Hayti, one of the most beautiful and magnificent islands in the world.

It was on the evening of the 6th of December that he entered a harbour at the western end of the island, to which he gave the name of St. Nicholas. The inhabitants, however, had fled from their dwellings, and it was not till he had sailed farther along the coast, and made several ineffectual attempts, that he was at length successful. But here, as elsewhere, he found the same general state of society, the same general circumstances of the people. One well acquainted with the true principles of social wealth would have seen abundant means of securing it; but of wealth, according to the ideas then attached to it, no other traces were found than in the golden ornaments which some possessed, though of the source whence originally procured they could give no certain account. Of its value they had no particular notion, readily exchanging their ornaments for trifling European trinkets. Their hospitality could only furnish fish, fruits, and cassava-bread; but it was exercised with the most unsuspecting freedom.

With one chief, or *cacique*, on the coast he became acquainted, and received a message from another, Guacanagari by name, whose power was

acknowledged by all that part of the island, inviting him to visit a place on the coast, a little farther to the eastward, where he resided. The party who were sent to this chieftain brought back so favourable an account that Columbus resolved to accept his invitation. Early in the morning of the 24th of December he sailed for this purpose, and a little before midnight had arrived within a couple of leagues of the place he had to visit. The weather was fine and the sea calm, so that the admiral, whose careful attention scarcely ever ceased, thought he might take the repose which he felt that he needed. Giving strict orders for watchfulness, he retired to his cabin. But the appearances of safety were too seductive to those whom he left on deck, and who had neither his responsibility nor his thoughtfulness. Thinking that all was right, one by one, those who ought to have watched fell fast asleep. The steersman, too, against the rule which forbade such a proceeding at any time, gave the helm in charge to a boy, whom he told to keep awake for a time while he rested himself; and thus, above and below, all were sleepers, save the boy at the helm, who understood nothing of the management of the vessel, even could he have observed its course.

Unknown to any one, the ship was now under the influence of a smooth but powerful current; and before long struck violently on a sand-bank. Columbus felt the shock, and hastened on deck,

where he witnessed the negligence consequent on his own brief retirement for necessary repose. He stood there and witnessed the deck empty, and the vessel aground. The sailing-master almost immediately followed him, but he ought not to have left his post; and the crew came up in the confusion of suddenly awakened men. They were required to carry an anchor astern, to assist in getting off the vessel; but when they were in the boat, instead of promptly obeying orders, they rowed off to the caravel commanded by Vincent Pinzon, then at some little distance, thus giving time for the vessel to be more deeply embedded in the sand. Pinzon was happily alive to the threatening danger, and sharply reproving the men in the boat for their cowardice in merely thinking of their own safety, and leaving their companions, for what they knew or cared, to perish, he refused to allow them to come on board, and not only ordered them back, but, directing his own boat to be at once manned, he hastened to the assistance of Columbus.

And it was time. The vessel had been driven farther upon the bank, and the keel was so fixed in the sand, that the cutting away the mast produced no benefit. The seams began to open, and the waves, calm as, happily, the sea was, beat on her with sufficient force to throw her over on one side. Had the weather been stormy, all must have been lost. As it was, Columbus and most of his crew had to leave the vessel, and take refuge

for the remainder of the night on board the caravel, anxiously waiting for morning, when they hoped for assistance from the shore, to deliver them from the terrible consequences resulting from heedlessness. No one had intended to do any harm. The weather was fine; all was right. 'Surely we may just have an hour's sleep, when we will return to our posts with redoubled diligence.' Thus the crew most likely reasoned, if such abandonment of the soul to present feeling is to be called reasoning; and thus reasoning, no one meaning to do harm, the vessel was wrecked, and had Providence permitted the wind to freshen, and the waves to rise, vessel and crew might have been lost.

The commander of the other caravel well knew his duty, and not only at once ordered the men who had rowed to his vessel to return, but with a party of his own crew followed them, to render aid to his companions in this perilous exigency. But nothing could be done till morning came, and then messengers were sent to give information to the friendly cacique. Assistance was promptly rendered, and everything was removed from the wreck to the shore. Nothing was pilfered; and every accommodation that native kindness could afford was given, in a manner the most affectionate.'

The cacique collected a number of his people, by whom various of their games were performed. Columbus also, caused his men to go through the

European military manœuvres. The Indians were most of all impressed by the firing of a cannon, loaded with a ball, the effect of which upon the trees against which it was directed they witnessed with equal surprise and terror. They called the Spaniards 'sons of heaven,' who had come to their protection armed with thunder and lightning. They soon saw the value attached by their visitors to gold, which themselves regarded chiefly as an ornament. Very willingly did they part with it in exchange for trifling European articles; and Columbus was informed that among some of the mountains of the island it was found in considerable quantities. He could not rid himself of his notions respecting Cipango (Japan), and began now to think that this was the island.

Some of the men, too, perceiving the easy life which the natives led, and contrasting the beauty of the place and the present fineness of the weather with the hardships which they anticipated on their voyage, began to indulge the wish of remaining where they were. This at length was mentioned to Columbus, who, meditating on it, formed the design of thus laying the foundation of a colony. The wreck of the vessel would furnish materials for the construction of a fortress; and during his absence, the men who remained might acquire the native language, explore the island, and collect gold. Such were his plans; and had they whom he left been animated by his spirit, the results might have been equally beneficial to

themselves, their new acquaintances, and their country. When will men learn that such is the established order of human affairs, in the administration of a Providence always supreme, that where the rules of rectitude are abandoned, whatever present gratification may be obtained, solid and permanent prosperity cannot possibly be secured?

While engaged in preparing both for his own return, and the establishment of the infant colony, Columbus heard that another vessel had anchored at the eastern end of the island. Knowing that his own ships alone had penetrated thus far across the ocean, he at once concluded that it was the *Pinta*, and immediately despatched a canoe with an earnest request that Pinzon would lose no time in rejoining him. The canoe returned unsuccessful; and Columbus was now oppressed by anxiety respecting his own circumstances. The remaining caravel was scarcely seaworthy, and a long voyage over a stormy ocean was before him. The wreck of this one vessel, he felt, would amount to the failure of the whole voyage. Who should then convey information to Spain, of the discoveries he had effected? And who, when nothing was ever heard of the first voyagers, would venture to undertake a similar enterprise? But his mind was not constituted to yield to difficulties, when an important object was before him. His uniform plan was to prepare to encounter them wisely, and, by thus encountering, to surmount them.

The first thing to be accomplished was the erection of the fortress; and this, by the constant labour of the men, assisted by the friendly Indians, was completed in less than a fortnight. From the number who wished to remain, he selected thirty-nine in whom he thought he could place most confidence, and appointed the officers who should command in his absence. He gave them rules for their conduct both to each other and to the natives; rules which, had they been observed with a fidelity corresponding to the wisdom with which they were framed, would have prevented the first records of European colonisation in the West Indies, in St. Domingo especially, from being inscribed in characters of blood, and the natives would not have seen, in the first Christians whose character they were called to contemplate, the exemplifications of sensuality, rapine, and tyranny.

As soon as the fortress was completed, the remaining caravel was got ready for the homeward voyage, and on the 4th of January, 1493, Columbus left La Navidad, and directed his adventurous prow towards Spain. On the 6th, before they were clear of the coast, a sailor from the mast-head gave the information that he saw a sail at a distance, approaching them with a favourable wind. This proved to be the long-missing *Pinta*. When Pinzon came on board, he attributed the separation of the vessels to stress of weather; and Columbus, wishing to avoid all altercation, appeared to believe him. It was after-

wards, however, ascertained that Pinzon had purposely taken the direction that he did; that he had been for some time at the eastern part of Hispaniola, and had collected a considerable quantity of gold, half of which he had retained for himself, and divided the remainder among his crew to purchase their secrecy. He had likewise carried off four Indian men and two girls, to be sold for slaves in Spain. Columbus sailed to the place where Pinzon had so long been, and, though with great opposition from him, ordered the Indians to be restored.

He then sailed into a large bay, still farther east, where he found the natives very savage and ferocious. For the first time, hostilities broke out, and in the skirmish several Indians were slain. On the following day, however, the cacique and his people, conscious, perhaps, of the immeasurable superiority which their fire-arms gave to the whites, were as peaceable as though nothing had occurred of a contrary nature, and received with thankfulness the presents which were made to them. The name of this cacique of 'Ciquay' was Mayonabex: he subsequently was found acting, in very trying circumstances, with much courage and magnanimity. On leaving this bay, four young Indians were taken along with them, as guides to the islands where the warlike Caribs were reported to dwell, still farther to the east. The men, however, began to be impatient for their return; and, as the wind was favourable, Columbus

resolved now to prosecute his voyage directly for home, and leave the task of proceeding with his discoveries for his next visit.

They sailed eastward, meeting with variable, but not particularly adverse, weather, till the 12th of February, when they had made such progress that they began to rejoice in hope of soon seeing land. On that day, however, a violent storm came on, in the course of which the *Pinta* was again separated from them. For some time they were in imminent danger of perishing, and numerous vows of penances and pilgrimages were made, to be performed should they be permitted to escape from the fury of winds and waves. The mind of the intrepid admiral was especially exercised. If, as he feared, the *Pinta* were lost, the whole account of his discoveries would remain in his own bark, now scarcely seaworthy. That the memory of his expedition should perish was more distressing to him even than the thoughts of his children, orphans as they then would be. To guard as far as possible against this, he wrote an account of his discoveries on parchment, placed it in the midst of a cake of wax, and fastening the whole in a cask, so constructed as to be watertight, he cast it into the sea.

After the third day, happily, the storm abated, and on the 15th of February they came in sight of St. Mary's, the southern island of the Azores, belonging to the King of Portugal. The wind, however, was so baffling, that it was two or three

days before they could anchor. There fresh trials awaited them. The Portuguese monarch, jealous of the undertaking which he had at first refused to patronise, had issued orders to the governors of the different settlements, if Columbus, returning, should call at any of them, to seize and detain him. Several attempts were here made with this object, but they proved unsuccessful; and on February 24th he was permitted to depart for Spain. He soon experienced a renewal of the tempestuous weather, and was for several days in greater danger than ever. Land was at length seen; and though it was near the mouth of the Tagus, and he had reason to doubt of the reception he should meet in Portugal, such was the shattered state of his vessel, that no choice was left him; and in the afternoon of March 4th he anchored in the river, bringing to Europe the momentous intelligence of the discovery of a new quarter of the globe.

Columbus lost no time in sending a messenger to the king and queen of Spain. At Lisbon all was astonishment. He was invited to the court, where those who had opposed his project when first presented there were filled with envy at his success. By the king, however, he was received generously, though he now deeply regretted his former conduct, and refused to listen to proposals made for the detention, and even the assassination, of the bold and skilful navigator who had himself realised the predictions which so many had scoffed.

He was permitted to seat himself in the royal presence; to the account he gave of his voyage and its results the most eager attention was paid; and orders were given that whatever he needed to recruit his sailors and repair his vessel should be furnished at free cost. He was escorted back to his ship by a numerous train, calling on his way at a monastery where the queen was with the ladies of her court, to whom, likewise, he recited his, to them, wonderful adventures.

At length, all being ready for sea, and the weather having become moderate, he left the Tagus on the 13th of March, sailing southward along a well-known coast; and in two days, on the 15th, seven months and a half after having quitted it on the greatest enterprise of modern times, he entered the harbour of Palos. And who can tell the feelings with which he would sail into the place in the neighbourhood of which he had experienced so much anxiety? Who can tell, above all, the feelings with which the vessel would be seen by the inhabitants? From the midst of them the crew had been taken. The departure of the little fleet had been witnessed with an almost hopeless despondency. Few expected ever to behold their friends again,—scarcely any to witness their return in the full triumph of success. Who can doubt that when the ship was first recognised, the tidings would be even rapturously communicated? From house to house the cry would be, 'Columbus is come back!'

It was soon known, too, that he had discovered new countries, some of the productions and inhabitants of which were on board. All business for that day came to an end. The bells rang merrily. And, happily, what soon might have been cause of mourning was removed. Of three vessels that had sailed only one had entered the port; but almost before there was time to inquire whether mourning for the lost was to be mingled with joy for the found,—before night set in, and the time for fireside reflection came,—the *Pinta* entered the harbour, and anchored by the side of her comrade. They had been driven by stress of weather into the Bay of Biscay, and had put into the port of Bayonne, whence Pinzon had written to court, informing the monarchs of the discoveries that had been made, and requesting permission to state what had occurred personally. He then sailed for Palos, hoping that he would arrive there first; but he was disappointed. He landed privately, an exception to the general joy; though a melancholy, yet a most instructive, example of the evil of yielding to temptation, and departing from the plain track of duty.

He was one of the first who had been convinced of the soundness of the arguments of Columbus; had stood by him, along with the prior of the convent of Rabida, when he was almost friendless; and when it had been resolved to undertake the voyage, he had not only employed all his influence in its favour, but embarked

his property in the enterprise, and courageously resolved personally to share all its dangers. Unhappily, when its main object had been secured, whether prompted by envy or by avarice, he allowed himself to be subdued by the desire of appropriating its honours to himself, and departed from his associates, both hoping to acquire more wealth and to be the first to announce success. Even after rejoining Columbus, before they left the new world behind them, the jealousy remained rankling in his bosom.

It is a melancholy fact, but one that is substantiated by all researches into the moral nature of man, that a merely human repentance is seldom powerful enough to induce him who has done wrong thoroughly to forgive those whom he has attempted to injure, even though they may have forgiven him. The doer of wrong is often far more resentful than he is who suffers it. Pinzon soon received letters forbidding his appearance at court, and censuring his desertion of his superior officer, in whose honours a persevering uprightness would have given him a large share. To physical weakness, mental suffering was now added, and their united influence brought him in a few days to his tomb.

CHAPTER XII.

RECEPTION IN SPAIN—PROGRESS TO BARCELONA—APPEARANCE AT COURT—HONOURS CONFERRED.

THE first act of Columbus, on landing at Palos, was what might have been anticipated. He had returned in safety from a difficult and dangerous voyage. He had achieved a discovery, whose importance, stretching out into the measureless future, far exceeded even his powers of estimation. Deeply impressed by the goodness of God, both in preserving him, and making him the instrument of bringing such information before the world, as soon as he landed, he and his men walked in procession to church, to hear mass. Going and returning, his progress was almost like an ancient triumph. The joyous shout of the people filled the air as this procession of mariners, with the hero of discovery at their head, passed along the crowded streets. What an instance of the value of persevering toil in obedience to well-studied conviction! Six years previously, he had landed at that very place with his youthful son, an obscure individual, so destitute that he was glad to receive the kindly-bestowed alms of the convent

by which he had to pass, his only wealth that conviction, of which he never lost hold, of the existence of a new world beyond the stormy Atlantic, waiting to disclose its secrets to the bold voyager who should go in quest of them. Through difficulties and discouragements, and finally through dangers, to this conviction he was faithful. He persevered, succeeded, and obtained his recompense.

Ferdinand and Isabella were then holding their court at Barcelona; and as soon as they received the news of the return of Columbus, he was sent for to give the account of his proceedings. Barcelona is almost at the northern extremity of the eastern coast of Spain, as Palos is almost at the southern extremity of its western coast. Columbus would have to traverse Spain by nearly its longest diagonal. Three hundred and fifty years ago travelling was even less expeditious than at the present day; and he had to take with him, to exhibit to his royal master and mistress, both the natives of the Western Indies and the specimens of the various productions of the islands which he had brought home. His progress, therefore, was unavoidably slow.

'He took with him on his journey,' says Mr. Prescott, 'specimens of the multifarious products of the newly-discovered regions. He was accompanied by several of the native islanders, arrayed in their simple barbaric costume, and decorated, as he passed through the principal cities, with

collars, bracelets, and other ornaments of gold, rudely fashioned: he exhibited also considerable quantities of the same metal in dust or in crude masses, numerous vegetable exotics possessed of aromatic or medicinal virtue, and several kinds of quadrupeds unknown in Europe, and birds whose varieties of gaudy plumage gave a brilliant effect to the pageant. The admiral's progress through the country was everywhere impeded by the multitudes thronging forth to gaze at the extraordinary spectacle, and the more extraordinary man, who, in the emphatic language of that term which has now lost its force from its familiarity, first revealed the existence of a "new world."

'As he passed through the busy, populous city of Seville, every window, balcony, and house-top which could afford a glimpse of him was crowded with spectators.' And the multitude was all the greater, that not only the inhabitants of the places through which he had to pass, but of those from a distance on either side the line of road, travelled to the point where they might be able to see the astonishing exhibition. This triumphant progress occupied nearly a month.

'It was the middle of April' (we again quote from Mr. Prescott) 'before Columbus reached Barcelona. The nobility and cavaliers in attendance on the court, together with the authorities of the city, came to the gates to receive him, and escorted him to the royal presence. Ferdinand and Isabella were seated, with their son, Prince

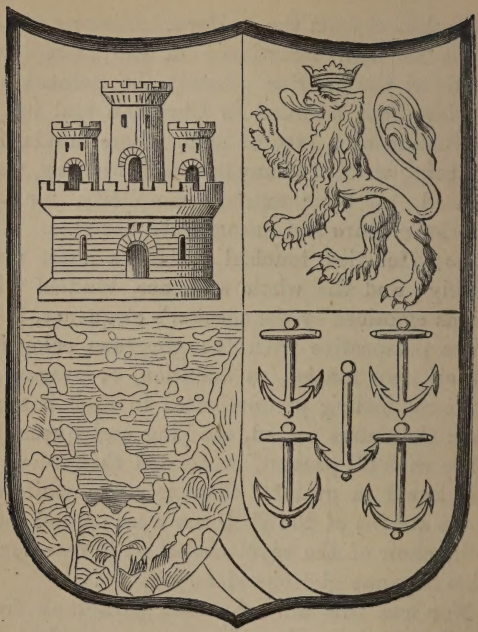
John, under a superb canopy of state, awaiting his arrival. On his approach they rose from their seats, and, extending their hands to him to salute, caused him to be seated before them. These were unprecedented marks of condescension to a person of Columbus's rank in the haughty and ceremonious court of Castile. It was, indeed, the proudest moment in the life of Columbus. He had fully established the truth of his long-contested theory, in the face of argument, sophistry, sneer, scepticism, and contempt. He had achieved this, not by chance, but by calculation, supported through the most adverse circumstances by consummate conduct. The honours paid him, which had hitherto been reserved only for rank, or fortune, or military success, purchased by the blood and tears of thousands, were, in his case, a homage to intellectual power, successfully exerted in behalf of the noblest interests of humanity.

'After a brief interval, the sovereigns requested from Columbus a recital of his adventures. His manner was sedate and dignified, but warmed by the glow of natural enthusiasm. He enumerated the several islands which he had visited, expatiated on the temperate character of the climate and the capacity of the soil for every variety of agricultural production, appealing to the samples imported by him as evidence of their natural fruitfulness. He dwelt more at large on the precious metals to be found in these islands; which he inferred, less from the specimens actually

obtained than from the uniform testimony of the natives to their abundance in the unexplored regions of the interior. Lastly, he pointed out the wide scope afforded to Christian zeal in the illumination of a race of men, whose minds, far from being wedded to any system of idolatry, were prepared, by their extreme simplicity, for the reception of pure and uncorrupted doctrine. The last consideration touched Isabella's heart most sensibly; and the whole audience, kindled with various emotions by the speaker's eloquence, filled up the perspective with the gorgeous colouring of their own fancies, as ambition, or avarice, or devotional feeling predominated in their bosoms. When Columbus ceased, the king and queen, together with all present, prostrated themselves on their knees in grateful thanksgivings, while the solemn strains of the *Te Deum* were poured forth by the choir of the royal chapel as in commemoration of some glorious victory.'*

Nor was this all. Another paragraph from Mr. Prescott's work will serve to complete the description of this, the highest merely human point in the history of this truly great and deservedly celebrated man. 'Columbus, during his residence at Barcelona, continued to receive from the Spanish sovereigns the most honourable distinctions which royal bounty could confer. When Ferdinand rode abroad, he was accom-

* Prescott's *History of the Reign of Ferdinand and Isabella the Catholic, of Spain*, vol. ii. pp. 148—151.



ARMS OF COLUMBUS.

panied by the admiral at his side. The courtiers, in emulation of their master, made frequent entertainments, at which he was treated with the punctilious deference paid to a noble of the highest class. But the attentions most grateful to his lofty spirit were the preparations of the Spanish court for prosecuting his discoveries on a scale commensurate with their importance. A board was established for the direction of Indian

affairs, consisting of a superintendent and two subordinate functionaries. The first of these officers was Juan de Fonseca, Archdeacon of Seville, an active, ambitious prelate, subsequently raised to high episcopal preferment, whose shrewdness and capacity for business enabled him to maintain the control of the Indian department during the whole of the present reign. An office for the transaction of business was instituted at Seville, and a custom house placed under its direction at Cadiz. This was the origin of the important establishment of the *Casa de la Contratacion de las Indias*, or India House.'

As to heraldic honours, Columbus was permitted to quarter the royal arms with his own, which consisted of a group of golden islands amid azure billows. To these were afterwards added five anchors, with the celebrated motto, well known as being carved on his sepulchre. He received besides the substantial gratuity of a thousand doblas of gold from the royal treasury, and the premium of 10,000 maravedises, promised to the person who first descried land.*

* The motto, afterwards inscribed on the costly monument erected over his remains in the cathedral at Seville, by King Ferdinand, was a pretty homely Spanish rhyme, easily imitated in English rhyme of the same character.

A Castilla y á Leon
Nuevo mundo dió Colon.'

'*Castile and Arragon now have*
A new world, which Columbus gave.'

CHAPTER XIII.

REVIEW OF THE CHARACTER AND WORK OF COLUMBUS —PAPAL BULL OF PARTITION—PREPARATIONS FOR AND DEPARTURE ON SECOND VOYAGE—ARRIVAL AT HISPANIOLA—STATE OF THE COLONY—DISASTER AT THE FORTRESS—FOUNDING A NEW SETTLEMENT—DISCONTENT AND SICKNESS—FURTHER EXPLORATIONS—CONFLICTS WITH THE NATIVES—RETURN TO SPAIN—RECEPTION AT COURT—PREPARATIONS FOR THIRD VOYAGE—CONSPIRACY AGAINST COLUMBUS—DEPARTURE FROM ST. LUCAR.

THE remaining portion of the life of Columbus may be given with far more brevity than the former two portions allowed. His early history, the gradual formation of the grand idea of discovery beyond the hitherto unpassed Atlantic, and his persevering efforts to procure the means of its realisation, constitute the first part; remarkable as exhibiting the workings of a mind at once thoughtfully calculating and ardent, searching long and thoroughly before deciding, but deciding once for all, maintaining the decision with firmness, and willing to venture life and everything on the experiment.

Not less remarkable is the second part, which contains the performance of the experiment itself. Never were apparently opposite qualities shown in combination more complete, decisive, or exemplary. Bold, to the very appearance of rashness, the boldness was the product of entire conviction, as the conviction was the effect of long and careful research. Ardent even to enthusiasm, the ardency was the fire of slowly-collected thought, whose massive solidity was not easily nor quickly enkindled; but which, once enkindled, burnt with a vehemence which no obstacles could resist, and with a steadiness which no delay could quench. And along with this ardour there was a patient intrepidity which no danger could terrify, and which knew equally how to advance and how to wait. In few men have the elements of greatness of character existed in such happy proportion as each to contribute to the strength of the whole; or been developed with such regard to external circumstances, as that all should contribute, each at its own time, and all in harmony with each other, so as to furnish the proper result.

The third and concluding part of the life of Columbus is evidently a portion of the grand epic constituted by the whole, and suggests lessons not less deserving study than those by which it was preceded; but the events which it includes demand not the same minuteness of attention. It may be said that he himself undertook his second voyage in a new character. Before, he had to

open the way on which subsequent labourers had to proceed. But after his return from his first voyage, the work of original discovery was completed. And had he paused here, and done no more, his character as a *discoverer* would have stood as high as now it does. *The problem was solved.* Others might have been left for the work of its practical application. Now it is as though, having forced the entry, he returned, not that others might pass through the door which he had found and opened, but that he himself might in this respect be the leader of his followers. To him was the double honour allotted, first, of being the sole discoverer of the New World, and, secondly, of being the first of a long list of enterprising travellers who have laboured at the task of particular description. We do not say that there is nothing new to exhibit; but this will be found to belong rather to the history of the *man*, —to his history in his more fully developed character, rather than in his more largely prosecuted works.

The opinion entertained by Columbus himself, that Cuba was the end of the Asiatic continent, was likewise generally adopted. Disputes might therefore arise on the subject with the crown of Portugal, to which all discoveries to the east had been confirmed by a papal bull. Ferdinand now solicited a similar authority for those made by his officers. The reigning pontiff was Alexander VI., a man eminent for vice, but crafty and able.

In his application Ferdinand had been careful to insinuate that he should maintain his rights by force, if they were not otherwise confirmed. A bull was therefore issued, dated May 2nd, 1493.* An ideal line was drawn from pole to pole, a hundred leagues west of the Azores; and to all countries discovered westward of this line the pope granted the same rights as were possessed by the Portuguese in regard to those which lay to its eastward. The pretended successor of the apostle who said, 'Silver and gold have I none,' thus claimed the right of partitioning the world between contending sovereigns! Thus, however, confirmed, as he believed, in the legitimate possession of his claims, Ferdinand lost no time in causing a second expedition to be fitted out. Twelve ecclesiastics were likewise to accompany it, to promote among the Indians the work of conversion to the Roman faith. And as now there was no suspicion of anything chimerical in the undertaking, the preparations were more on a scale corresponding to its admitted importance and magnitude.

The excitement occasioned by the recital of Columbus brought him many adventurers, re-

* In consequence of subsequent disputes between the two crowns, another bull was issued June 4th, 1494, removing the dividing line to three hundred and seventy leagues west of the Cape de Verde Islands. A singular consequence of this alteration was, that Brazil became the property of Portugal.

questing to be permitted to accompany him. Some were influenced by avarice, some by the love of romantic enterprise. Among the cavaliers was one of the name of Alonso de Ojeda, a young man of good family, and expert in all the exercises then considered necessary for a brave and accomplished cavalier. During the preparation disputes several times arose between Columbus and the persons employed to superintend it. This was particularly the case with Juan de Fonseca, an able but malignant and vindictive ecclesiastic. Columbus had to appeal to Ferdinand, who decided in his favour, and even reprimanded Fonseca. But in this victory were the seeds of future ill. Fonseca became the bitter enemy of Columbus; and from his position at the head of Indian affairs, which he maintained for thirty years, he had many opportunities of gratifying his rancorous temper; and in after times Columbus was made repeatedly to feel this, and at length to drink to the very dregs the cup of degradation.

If the departure from Palos on the first voyage was gloomy, the second, from Cadiz, was altogether of a different character. There were three large ships of heavy burden, and fourteen caravels. The number of men permitted to sail was *one thousand;* but some were permitted to go without pay, and others, so great was the enthusiasm, embarked by stealth, so that on the whole Columbus was accompanied by *fifteen hundred* persons. Crowds thronged all the way to the

shore, and he put off with the acclamations of the joyous multitude. He first sailed direct to the Canaries, where he took on board live stock, plants, and seeds, for Hispaniola. Departing for his main voyage, October 13th, he lost sight of Ferro (north latitude about $27\frac{1}{2}°$), and steered nearly a south-westerly course, which brought him to land much earlier, as the Antilles lie about in 60° west longitude, ranging from 20° to 10° north latitude.

At day-break, November 2nd, twenty-eight days sooner than on his former voyage, he came to an island, to which, having been first seen on the Sunday, he gave the name of Dominica. Guadaloupe was next discovered, a little to the north; and here the Spaniards first saw the pine-apple. Traces of cannibalism were likewise perceived. Others of the Caribbean islands were discovered. At one of them, where the inhabitants were very ferocious, the Spaniards had an encounter with them, in which the women fought as desperately as the men. One of the Spaniards died a few days after, from a wound by a poisoned arrow. Keeping to the westward, the large island of Porto Rico was discovered, from the western extremity of which to the eastern cape of St. Domingo was a plain sail of about sixty miles. He arrived there November 22nd.

Touching one day on the coast, on their way to La Navidad, two or three bodies were found on the shore, in a state of decay, but with evident

marks of violence. One of them at least was a European. This event produced the utmost anxiety for the colony, to which they now hastened, and, arriving there on the 27th of November, had their worst fears realised. After much inquiry, it was found that the Spaniards had quarrelled among themselves, and, instead of either industriously prosecuting the designs of Columbus, or keeping good order, many spent their time indolently among the Indians. A neighbouring cacique, a Carib, by name Caonabo, formed the design of surprising them. He did so most effectually. He came by night on the fortress, in which were only ten men; the rest were in the village, where they were living in sensual, lawless security. The Spaniards in the fort all lost their lives. The friendly Indians were defeated, and many of the whites massacred, and the settlement was completely broken up. Neither gold nor any other valuable articles had been collected, and the conquerors had carried off the property of the white men as their booty.

Columbus, however deeply he felt the occurrence, lost no time in seeking to remedy it. He chose a better place, by a harbour ten leagues to the eastward, in a strong position, for his projected colony, where he laid the foundation of a town. And now began his troubles. They who accompanied him had expected to live an easy life, and to collect gold almost at their will. When they were called to labour in the construction of

the buildings, and found that gold was only to be collected gradually, and with care, they became dissatisfied and turbulent; and Columbus saw that the prospect before him was full of difficulties. He had, also, promised to send some of the vessels back to Spain, with the gold and other articles, which he expected to find ready. Nothing was provided.

An expedition into the interior was planned, under the command of Don Alonso de Ojeda. On reaching the mountains they saw that the gold was contained in the sands of the rivers flowing down from them. They brought home all they could find. Ojeda picked up a mass of rude gold weighing nine ounces. Columbus sent seven caravels back to Spain, as well loaded as his circumstances allowed, and detailed the history of the disasters which had occurred. But in the colony the seeds of anger and sedition were rapidly growing among the number of factious and disappointed men there. A conspiracy was formed, headed by the comptroller, to take advantage of an illness of Columbus (brought on by anxiety and fatigue, and which, for some time, confined him to his bed), to seize on the ships in the harbour, and return to Spain. It was discovered before it broke out. The leader was sent home to Spain for trial; and others were punished, though not as they deserved.

And now another difficulty became apparent. Columbus was a foreigner, with no friends in

Spain but those procured by his merits. The conspirators were Spaniards; with whom even the better-disposed sympathised as their fellow-countrymen; and at home their connections were numerous,—of some of them, powerful. Hoping that activity would calm the disturbed spirits of his people, he projected a powerful expedition into the interior, which he commenced on the 12th of March, leaving his brother Diego to command at Isabella (the name of the new city) during his absence. They penetrated into the region where gold was most plentiful, and in one place he began to build a fortress, naming it St. Thomas. The inhabitants were found to be such as they had hitherto mostly appeared to be; and having acquired all the information in his power, he returned, with the gold and other articles gathered in the progress, to Isabella. Alarming intelligence soon arrived from Fort St. Thomas. The Indians had become unfriendly, and an attack from Caonabo was anticipated. To render this still more distressing, maladies, arising from change of climate and diet, had broken out among the colonists, augmenting the prevalent dissatisfaction.

He made what arrangements he could for the safety of the people, established a junta of government under his brother Diego, and, leaving two of his largest vessels in the harbour, on the 29th of April sailed for further discoveries in Cuba. He resolved to coast along its south side, hoping

to arrive at the dominions of the Grand Khan; an illusion which, in one form or another, influenced him to the last. After having pursued this course some days, and still being pointed to the south for the golden country, on the 2nd of May he steered in that direction, and soon came in sight of Jamaica. He found the inhabitants both more ingenious and warlike than those of Cuba and Hayti; but, after coasting to its western end, finding no more of the great object of his quest than usual, he returned to Cuba, and slowly proceeded westward, but still only perceiving the same general objects. His crews became, at length, dissatisfied; and though they would soon have arrived at the western extremity, insisted so strongly on returning that he was obliged to comply. Again touching at Jamaica, August 20th he made the western end of Hayti, sailed along the southern coast of the island, and had resolved to complete the discovery of the Caribbean islands, when, worn out by the fatigues and anxieties he had experienced since his arrival, his health entirely gave way; he sank into a death-like lethargy and in a state of insensibility was conveyed to Isabella.

After recovering his recollection, he rejoiced to see his brother Bartholomew, who, after his journey to England, had been captured by a corsair on his return, and did not reach Spain till after his brother had left on his second voyage. As he was an able navigator, the sovereigns in-

trusted him with the command of three vessels with supplies for the new settlements; and he had arrived at Isabella just before Columbus was brought there dangerously ill. He was the more thankful for this arrival of one in whose fidelity and talents he could repose implicit confidence, because, in his absence, avarice, licentiousness, indolence, and pride had done their work, and the whole island was a scene of violence and discord. The cacique, Caonabo, had taken advantage of the Spanish dissensions, and mingling the craft with the ferocious bravery of the savage warrior-chief, he had sought the destruction of the new comers. The vigilance, courage, and activity of Don Alonzo de Ojeda, however, combined with European discipline, and the possession of firearms, rendered his attacks abortive; but hostilities were unceasing, and the affairs of the colony in the most critical condition. Dissatisfaction, too, was extensive. Labour and fighting were not the objects for which the majority had left Spain; and, in the bitterness of disappointment, they considered themselves as injured by Columbus.

His great object, however, was the defeat of the hostile Indians. By a bold stratagem, conceived and executed by Ojeda, he obtained possession of the person of his most dangerous foe, Caonabo, who was imprisoned, though otherwise treated well. His brother raised a force for his rescue, but was defeated by Ojeda. Soon after,

Columbus sent some vessels to Spain, with reports of his progress, and everything valuable he had been able to collect; and knowing that among those who had returned were two of his chief enemies,—Friar Buyl, and a Catalonian officer, Margarite, to whom the command of the fortress of St. Thomas had first been entrusted, but who had been removed for misbehaviour,—he sent his brother Diego to explain the real state of things, and to defend his authority and character.

In March, 1495, Columbus learned that several caciques had united their forces, and were preparing to attack the Spaniards. He resolved to anticipate their schemes; and, on the 27th of March, formed all the men who were available for the purpose into a company, only amounting to two hundred infantry and twenty horse; and with this little army marched to meet the foe, taking along with him twenty blood-hounds, that animal being already introduced into West Indian service. In a few days, by rapid marches, concealing themselves as much as possible in the woods, they came to the *vega*, or plain, where a vast number of Indians were collected. The plain was nearly surrounded by forests, from the shelter of which the attack was made, for some time, with fire-arms; and then, when the Indians were thrown into confusion, they were charged by Ojeda, and in a short time the rout was total.

Columbus, on his return, assumed the government of the whole island, whose inhabitants,

according to the notions of the day, had been given as subjects to the Spanish crown. A regular tribute was imposed of gold and cotton, and the natives felt that their thraldom was complete.

The enemies of Columbus were now busily seeking to undermine his reputation in Spain. Saying nothing of the seditions which had called for punishment, nor of the idleness and profligacy which had sometimes rendered enforced labour the only preservation from ruin, they gave the worst form, and the darkest colouring, to all the acts of his government, and even supplied matters of well-grounded charge. Those, too, who had remained behind, and who had expected to be rich at once, and to indulge themselves in slothful sensuality, sent their reports to their friends in various parts of the country.

And now appeared one of the consequences of the mistaken notions of Columbus as to the geography of those western countries. He believed that his voyage would take him to the civilised and wealthy regions of Asiatic India; and when countries and people so different were discovered, scarcely any were far-sighted enough to perceive the real benefits that would ultimately accrue; but, disappointed in their dreams of immediate wealth, they fell into the opposite extreme, when the first glow of enthusiasm had passed away, of undervaluing the splendid discoveries which had actually been made, and not only of derogating from the merit of the great man by whose know-

ledge and ability they had been achieved, but of regarding him as positively criminal. Fonseca, too, was always ready to give credit to these charges, and, as far as he could, to enforce them at court. Ferdinand, as well as his enlightened consort, appears to have seen through them; but he was crafty and politic, and especially desirous to gain as much as he could at as little expense as was possible, and to allow Columbus to possess no power that might at a subsequent period become dangerous to the supreme authority of the crown. He did not, therefore, promptly repel the unjust accusations, as did the more noble-minded and generous Isabella, who never allowed her favour towards him to be shadowed.

It was at length resolved to send out one Juan Aguado to inquire into the circumstances of the colony. He appears to have been a weak and vain man; and when he arrived in Hispaniola, it was soon known that he was ready to receive all complaints against Columbus. The consequences may be at once anticipated. Every disappointed man is ready to blame any one rather than himself; and every evil-doer regards the magistrate as a tyrant. Aguado had soon abundant materials for his report, and prepared to return to Spain with them. Columbus, also, awake to the true position of affairs, resolved to return at the same time. All was ready for their departure, when one of those tremendous storms common in tropical climes,—called by the natives *uracanes*, hence

'hurricanes,'—and of greater force than usual, swept over the island. Of the vessels ready to sail, three sank while at anchor, and all on board perished; the others were driven on shore, some being total wrecks.

While new preparations were making for the voyage which had thus been delayed most important intelligence was received. Hitherto, the gold found had been obtained from the sand of the mountain torrents, but no places had been discovered where the veins of the precious metal might be wrought. A young man had fled with a young Indian woman (she was afterwards baptized, and married to him), and resided on the opposite side of the island, near the present city of St. Domingo. Hoping to retain him, and knowing how much the Spaniards valued gold, she took him to several places in the mountains, where gold-veins were to be seen in the rocks. In the midst of so much that is dark and even disgusting in the behaviour of the bulk of the Spaniards, it is pleasing to have one instance to record of virtue and nobleness of mind. The young man had been in the service of Bartholomew Columbus, and, knowing the importance of the information he could afford, he believed that he should obtain pardon for his desertion, and therefore returned to state what he had learned. He was equally faithful to his Indian bride and to his country.

Columbus lost no time in having these incipient mines examined, and rejoiced that the oppor-

tunity of carrying such intelligence to Spain had been afforded to him. The voyage was long and disastrous. The winds were tempestuous and contrary. The vessel was crowded; and some of the most factious having resolved to return, and others being compelled to do so by the failure of their health. The usual sufferings of a stormy and protracted passage were aggravated by an alarming scarcity of provisions. Some who were on board wished Columbus to *kill for food* some of the Indians he was taking with him; and it required all his authority and firmness to prevent the execution of their horrid proposal. The voyage was at length concluded; and on the 11th of June, 1496, the vessel anchored in the bay of Cadiz.

It was as though everything now conspired against Columbus. From that port he had sailed with a splendid equipment, and fifteen hundred enthusiastic followers, amid the plaudits and shouts of a multitude of spectators. One shattered vessel returned, with a sickly and half-famished crew, and passengers in the same condition. Their garments were tattered, their countenances sunken and care-worn, and their complexion so sallow, that the angry and biting jest became common, that 'they had brought home more gold in their faces than in their pockets.' Columbus himself, who had put off from that very shore a splendidly arrayed cavalier, in glittering armour, came on shore, in pursuance of some vow, in the

habit of a Franciscan friar, his beard long and untrimmed, and girt round the waist with the cord of the order. He hastened, however, to the court at Burgos, carrying with him a number of golden ornaments and several Indians. He was received with favour, and even kindness; but he soon perceived that the national enthusiasm had died away, that his enemies were numerous and powerful, ready to exaggerate his mistakes into faults, his faults into high crimes; in short, to view everything in the aspect in which it might bear most hardly upon him. But for the resolution of the sovereigns, he must have sunk under the weight thus fallen upon him.

The discovery of the gold mines at Hayti was a favourable circumstance; and, perhaps, chiefly induced the sovereigns to comply with his request, that two vessels should be despatched with supplies for the colony, and six put under his own command for a third voyage of discovery. But he had to experience many vexatious delays. He felt the enmity of Fonseca at every step. And the Spanish exchequer was inadequate to the pressing demands then made on it through the foreign relations of the country. It had been hoped that, not only would these new Indies repay the expenses connected with their discovery, but materially, and at once, improve the finances of the state. Instead of this, there was a present and heavy expenditure, far exceeding the actual returns. Few saw that the returns, though slow, were ultimately certain.

Fewer still perceived, or were willing to acknowledge, the reason they were not greater. Agriculture had been neglected, for the greedy for gold could not condescend to labour. The Indians had been so treated, that even the little cultivation of the ground to which they were accustomed had been resolutely omitted, as they hoped, at the hazard of starving themselves, to starve out their invaders. The more able and faithful Spaniards had to be employed in conflicts which the wanton and intolerable outrages of the others had provoked, and which were so devastating, that the natives were almost exterminated. In four years from the first arrival of the Europeans, several hundred thousands had been made their victims. Famine, at one time, was only avoided by a law of compulsory labour, and a diminished allowance of food. Hence the poverty of the settlement, and the torrent of complaints of the settlers. 'These unpalatable regulations,' Mr. Prescott has observed, with a keen sense of justice, 'soon bred general discontent. The high-mettled hidalgos, especially, complained loudly of the indignity of such mechanical drudgery, while Father Buyl and his brethren were equally outraged by the diminution of their regular rations.' *

* How is it that the followers and disciples of these Father Buyls seem always so attached to a life of laziness; that they are so ready to complain of all who will not, as a matter of duty, feed them in it; and that they are so ready to engage, not only in slanderous accusations, but in acts of violence and outrage? Because of their monkery?

The fleet was not ready for Columbus till the beginning of 1498; and when the vessels were equipped, great difficulty was found in manning them. The tide of popular feeling had again set in against the expedition; and at length he suggested the unhappy expedient, the bitter fruit of which he himself soon felt, of commuting the punishment of convicts to transportation to the West Indies. The evils which already so oppressed him arose from the bad character of so many of the settlers; and this measure tended powerfully to strengthen the mischief.

At length, however, all things being ready, he sailed from St. Lucar on May 30th, 1498. But, just before he embarked, a painful incident occurred, in which the well disciplined, strongly governed mind of the man was for once, unhappily, overcome. The enmity of Fonseca was so well known, that even his menial agents were encouraged to be insolent. One of them, Ximeno de Breviesca, a converted Moor or Jew, whose tongue was unbridled, so provoked Columbus by his audacity, that he struck him down and spurned him. He had to pause now for his own justification. This act was declared to be a proof of his vindictive temper and harshness in government. He entreated the sovereigns not to allow it to injure him in their opinion, 'but to remember, when anything should be said to his disparagement, that he was "absent, envied, and a stranger."' *

* Washington Irving's *Life of Columbus.*

CHAPTER XIV.

THE THIRD VOYAGE—DISCOVERY OF SOUTH AMERICA—DISASTERS AT HISPANIOLA—ORDERED BACK TO SPAIN—LANDED AT CADIZ IN CHAINS—RELEASED BY THE KING.

THE third voyage of this great man was now commenced. From the Madeira Islands he despatched three of his vessels to Hispaniola with supplies; with the remaining three he prosecuted his own voyage, sailing first for the Cape de Verde Islands, and thence south-west till he arrived in the latitude of 5° north. Here the weather became calm, and intensely hot. Ultimately, he availed himself of a light breeze, and sailed more northerly. On the 31st of July, three mountains were seen from the mast-head. Sailing towards them, he came to an island, to which, because these three mountains at the base were united, he gave the name which it still retains, Trinidad. Sailing along its south side, he saw land stretching along for twenty leagues. Supposing it to be another island, he called it La Isla Santa. It was part of the coast of the great South American continent, near the mouths of

the Orinoco, which he then, though not aware of it, beheld for the first time.

Trinidad seems almost as though broken off from the continent. Its northern coast runs on as though it were a continuation of the coast of the mainland. Just opposite its western corner, the mainland sends out a long, projecting, narrow neck, as though to meet it, which it almost does. Southward, it recedes again to the west, forming a gulf, bounded by the mainland on the west, and Trinidad on the east. On the north and south the island and continent project towards each other: the spaces between them are the only entrances from the sea. One of the outlets of the Orinoco flows into it. This is the Gulf of Paria.

Columbus spent a little time here. He was surprised at the lessened saltness of the water. He little thought that the group of numerous islands were formed by the different outlets of a mighty river, or that when he went on shore he then stood on the *terra firma* of a vast continent. From the natives he procured a number of pearls, many of them of fine size and quality. The fishery for pearls was a gratifying discovery to him; and the various phenomena he witnessed so strongly excited his curiosity, that he much wished to remain longer for further investigation. But his sea-stores were almost exhausted, and he was suffering severely from the gout. On the 14th of August he left the gulf by its northern entrance, and sailed direct for Hispaniola, where

he arrived wearied, and, through a complaint in his eyes, almost blind; but where he was most affectionately welcomed by the adelantado, or lieutenant-governor, his brother Bartholomew, whom he had invested with that command on his departure.

Columbus found the affairs of the colony in a deplorable state. Faction had produced the most destructive dissensions. Conspiracies had been formed, which required force to put them down; and great outrages had been committed on the Indians. These were so exasperated, that when they beheld the weakness occasioned by these quarrels and disturbances, they refused to pay the accustomed tribute. A traitor of the name of Roldan induced a number of Spaniards to accompany him to a part of the island where he said they might establish themselves, and live easy and happy lives. By happiness he meant sensuality. He instigated the Indians to war, and the adelantado and his troops were almost wearied out with the incessant toil which hostilities occasioned. Never was the Christian name more fearfully disgraced, and never was the moral character of the Divine administration more clearly visible. The natural operations of wickedness, not only extinguished what might have been a rich and noble prosperity, as advantageous to the natives as to the settlers, but lit up a flame of mischief ultimately destructive of the very last Indian, and withered the European settlements in their whole

progress, till a dreadful revenge, almost in our own day, drove out the last white man, and left Hayti the possession of the imported negroes.

When Columbus arrived, Roldan and his party were living in another part of the island. The caravels sent by Columbus from Cape de Verde Islands had put in there, and, as the captains were ignorant of the real state of the island, the rebel was received on board, and soon persuaded the half-pardoned convicts on board to join him. His strength was so great, that Columbus, though superior, felt it necessary to temporise, lest, in the weakness of civil war, the Indians should destroy both. But though an apparent accommodation was effected, the cause of Columbus was deeply injured in Spain. Roldan wrote home, and laid all the blame on the brothers. Columbus simply narrated the affair; but the tales of his enemies found believers, and added to the prejudices against him which had already operated so powerfully. In such cases, the worse side, unless dealt with by justice in its power, will always gain the ascendancy. For such men as this Roldan, not to be punished was a victory.

For some time matters continued in this painful condition. But at home, the power of his enemies increased. At every opportunity he sent true accounts of the actual state of things; but Fonseca was always ready to receive accusations, and was supported by the friends of the abandoned wretches who were thus building up in wickedness

Spanish colonisation in the New World. He was one, and at a distance, and spoke only by his letters. His enemies at home and abroad were numerous. The settlers opposed to him were not men likely to regard truth, and their friends in Spain only sought matter of accusation.

By numbers and perseverance they, at length, so far prevailed, that Ferdinand had not courage to continue his resistance. His craftiness would likewise induce him to think that Columbus had already done as much service as was to be expected from him, and that his withdrawment would at all events bring peace. He yielded, therefore, to the solicitations of the adversaries of Columbus, who were careful to present their requests in the most equitable guise, and conceal their unconquerable animosity under the appearances of a strict justice. They only wished for inquiry; from which Columbus, if innocent, as he represented himself, would come forth, not only with safety, but even with honour. They thus procured the appointment of a judge, invested with full powers, and therefore superior to the admiral himself; and had a proper person been appointed, the bold Genoese, whose gifts were so far in advance of his age, would have been spared the cutting degradation to which he was subjected, and Ferdinand the blackest ingratitude of which he could have been guilty. It was right that the matter should have been brought to decision; but if Ferdinand had desired, not just to be freed from

RUINS OF COLUMBUS' HOUSE, NEAR ST. DOMINGO.

the trouble of hearing accusations, designed by constant repetition to supply the lack of truth and honesty, but to procure a decision which should establish the truth, he ought to have taken the utmost care to send out one from whom, so far as expectation may be founded on man, he might satisfactorily expect a decision according to justice. Awful is the responsibility of those who possess power, be it in a higher or lower degree. An obligation rests on them *to be just.* Mistaken they may be, for they are men; but no allowance is to be made for mistake where every precaution has not been taken to avoid it.

The person appointed as Ferdinand's delegate, —and for whose acts, if he were an improper person, and Ferdinand had not taken the utmost care to ascertain his capability, both as to talent and integrity, Ferdinand was responsible to *his* sovereign,—was Don Francisco de Bobadilla. He was an officer in the royal household, and commander of the religious and military order of Calatrava. He was said to be a very religious man. Among the evil-doers in Hispaniola, who had ruined the colony, and were now seeking revenge on Columbus because he opposed their indolence, licentiousness, avarice, and haughtiness, perhaps there was scarcely one who would not, at the appointed hour, recite the regular prayers. Fonseca likewise was called a religious man. But the mere religion of externalism is no security for moral uprightness. With far greater appearance

of truth, it is said that he was passionate and ambitious; and also, that, though in exalted rank, his circumstances were needy.

Don Francisco arrived at St. Domingo on the 23rd of August, 1500. Columbus had just put down a daring rebellion, and had felt himself obliged, by its character, to cause some of the leaders to be executed. Their bodies, suspended on a gibbet near the harbour, were seen by Bobadilla as he entered, and he immediately considered this as a proof of the admiral's cruelty. He had been invested with the power of governor, in case of the proved delinquency of Columbus; but the day after he landed, without inquiry, except from the admiral's foes, who had already gained his favour, and without having even seen Columbus, he caused his patent as governor to be proclaimed, and assumed the supreme authority. He took up his abode in the house of Columbus, who was then absent, seized on all his papers, and disposed of all his property as if already confiscated to the crown.

The remainder may be anticipated. The officer who could act thus was not likely to observe any further forms of justice, nor to exercise his power with mercy. He arrested Don Diego without stating any reason, put him in irons, and confined him on board a vessel in the harbour. As soon as Columbus arrived, he ordered him also to be arrested, conducted to the fort as a prisoner, and likewise to be put in irons. Columbus sub-

mitted patiently to all; but when the fetters were brought, the recollection of his services, as well as his unbroken dignity in adversity, made every one unwilling to put them on; and the hero of adversity stood waiting to be manacled, till one of his own servants came forward to rivet the chains. Two fine pictures might be furnished by an artist capable of expressing on the canvas the mind as shown in the countenance. The first should be Columbus on the prow of his vessel, looking towards the land, in the first glow of the morning after the night in which land had been discovered by the waving of a distant light, though darkness still veiled the long wished-for object. The second should be Columbus standing in the prison of the fortress, surrounded by those who had conducted him there, holding the fetters that they shrank from fastening on him; while, in perfect contrast with the nobility of the prisoner, would be seen the reptile meanness of the servant coming forward to bind him.

Not even the dignified submission of Columbus could affect the soul of Bobadilla, who, judging of others by himself, seems to have believed that his prisoner was awed by the dignity of his superior. Don Bartholomew, arriving soon after, experienced the same treatment. Vice had now obtained the victory; and they whose conduct had occasioned the distresses of the colony revelled in their triumph. Bobadilla soon collected sufficient matter of accusation, and Columbus, still in chains,

was ordered to be taken to Spain. He went to the ship once more amidst shouts; but they were the shouts of a miscreant rabble, who took a brutal joy in heaping insults on his venerable head, and sent curses after him from the island he had so recently added to the civilised world.'* The officer who had to convey him to Spain, Alonso de Villejo, *was in the employ of Fonseca*,—a significant circumstance. He was a man, however, of honourable feeling, and sought to render the voyage as little irksome to him as possible. He would have removed the irons; but to this Columbus would not consent. 'I was directed by my sovereigns to submit to Bobadilla in their name. By their authority he has put on me these chains, and I will wear them till they are by the same authority removed. I shall then preserve them as relics and memorials of the reward of my services.' He afterwards hung them up in his cabinet; and his dying request was that they might be buried with him.

When Columbus arrived in Cadiz, and was taken on shore in chains, a generous burst of indignation arose on every side, which soon spread throughout Spain. Not knowing how far his treatment was due to the orders of the sovereigns, he did not write to them, but to a lady of high rank, who had been nurse to Prince Juan. To her he fully explained the whole case, justifying his conduct so clearly, and in such moving language, that when

* Washington Irving: *Life of Columbus.*

the letter was read to Isabella, her sympathy and indignation were strongly excited. The king, too, soon saw that his officers had not only gone too far for justice, but too far even for the public opinion of that day. Orders were sent off, without waiting for the despatches of Bobadilla, to release the prisoner; a large sum of money was sent to him, and he was directed to repair forthwith to the court. His reception there was as favourable as ever. When the queen saw him approach, still dignified, but mournful, and now evidently worn with both care and age, she burst into tears, and Columbus was subdued. The contumely of the upstarts of Hispaniola his lofty mind had sustained; but to see the weeping sympathy of his sovereign, was more than he could bear. He knelt before her, and wept aloud. The sovereigns encouraged him by kind expressions, and he eloquently vindicated himself. Ferdinand saw through the whole; but he was now resolved to be governed by his usual policy. Columbus should be honoured and rewarded, but not restored to his former official condition.

The king began now to be aware of the true magnificence and value of the almost boundless field of discovery to which Columbus had led the way; and he was unwilling to allow him to realise the honours and wealth for which he had originally stipulated. He endeavoured to prevail on this faithful servant to exchange the reward previously agreed upon for possessions and rank in Spain.

He felt that Columbus was no longer necessary; and the viceroyalty of the Spanish Indies already appeared to be an office to which some, even among the higher rank of courtiers, might aspire. And this point was soon decided. Not only the conduct of Bobadilla to Columbus, but his subsequent conduct to the natives, demanded his recall. His own avarice suggested that this might be the case; and he both acted accordingly himself, and exhorted his menial supporters to do the same. To collect gold by any means was their only object; and to effect this, the natives were oppressed, and the colony governed, worse than ever. Don Nicolas de Ovando was appointed to supersede him, who was very different from his predecessor, but to the Indians he was a cruel oppressor; and his conduct to Columbus was most ungenerous. His powers were ample, and government extensive; and with a brilliant retinue, and thirty vessels, carrying two thousand five hundred persons, he left Spain for the new world on February 13th, 1502.

Columbus continued at home, a solicitor for justice. At one time, he conceived a project for the recovery of the Holy Sepulchre. At length, the arrival of Vasco de Gama from India, and the wealth which seemed pouring into Portugal, induced him to request that he might undertake a fourth voyage, in which he still hoped to arrive at Asia by sailing to the west.

CHAPTER XV.

THE FOURTH VOYAGE—VISITS PANAMA—RETURN TO ST. DOMINGO—FINALLY LEAVES THE NEW WORLD—LANDING AT ST. LUCAR—DEATH OF THE QUEEN—INDIFFERENCE OF FERDINAND—DEATH.

AT last he obtained permission; and having completed the necessary preparations, on the 9th of May, 1502, he sailed from Cadiz, though with only four vessels; the largest of seventy, the smallest of fifty, tons burden. His crew consisted of one hundred and fifty men. His object was to discover a strait by which he might pass into undiscovered seas, and complete the circumnavigation of the globe. He was forbidden to touch at Hispaniola; and his own plan was to follow the coast from the Gulf of Paria till he should arrive at the expected opening. He reached Martinico on the 15th of June. The leaky condition of his own vessel, and her unfitness to struggle with stormy weather, obliged him to sail to Santo Domingo, hoping to exchange his vessel there for a better. *Ovando refused to allow him even to land.* A fleet was at that time ready to sail for the mother country. On board were several mutineers, whom Ovando was sending home for trial. Bobadilla was returning, having succeeded in amassing

immense riches. He had one large mass of pure gold, which he intended as a present to purchase security. Other adventurers had likewise taken on board large quantities of gold. One vessel, said to be the weakest in the fleet, carried about four thousand pieces of gold, the property of Columbus, which his agent was remitting. Though repelled from the shores he had discovered, Columbus was not like his vindictive foes. His knowledge led him to anticipate the approach of a hurricane; and he sent a message, stating his fears, and praying that the departure of the fleet, the wealthiest that had yet sailed for Spain, might be delayed. He himself took refuge in a place of as great security as he could find, some distance to the westward. In a day or two a tremendous hurricane came on, and nothing but the precautions he had taken saved his little fleet from total destruction.

In the meantime, Ovando, so far from attending to the warning thus kindly given, had hastened the sailing of the Spanish fleet; and Bobadilla, with his ill-gotten riches, rejoiced to find himself on his way home. Scarcely were they well out to sea, when the storm came down in fury, and the sailors were utterly powerless. Of the eighteen ships, only three or four escaped; and these were obliged to return to St. Domingo. The richest vessels foundered, and among them that which carried Bobadilla and his wealth; as also did one on board which were two hundred thousand *castellanos* of gold, one-half of which was the property of the crown.

It is remarkable that the vessel containing the property of Columbus sustained the least injury, and that it was the *only one* that returned safe to Spain. It is not for man to speak as an oracle on such events. Our Saviour, in the case of the Galileans slain by Pilate, and those on whom the tower in Siloam fell and slew them, has forbidden all such rash decisions concerning the administration of the providential government of God. But, on the other hand, it is not to be forgotten that 'there is a God that judgeth in the earth;' and that there are occurrences in which 'the Lord is known by the judgments which He executeth.' When such wonderful coincidences are seen, the Christian will bow with awe in adoration of the righteousness of the Lord God omnipotent, who reigneth King for ever.

Columbus now pursued his voyage. He first arrived on the south coast of Cuba, and thence steering nearly to the south-west, he reached the mainland where Truxillo now stands, in the Gulf of Honduras. The inhabitants here told him of a country well cultivated, rich, and populous, to the north-west. Never was he so near his great object as now. Had he listened to them, the discovery of Mexico might not have been left for Cortes. He was now on the northern coast of the Isthmus of Panama. Only once, and that not yet, was he within a less distance of the mighty Pacific. But he was prepossessed by the belief of a strait; and for its discovery kept sailing along the coast,

to the east and south. The weather became very stormy, and himself seriously ill, so that for some time he made little progress. The natives, at the different places at which he landed, he found more warlike. Various rumours induced him several times to send out exploring parties; and he had sometimes severe contests with the Indians, in which several of the Spaniards lost their lives.

It is singular that he paid no attention to the rumours which would have led him to Mexico. Much gold, however, was collected; and in the end of April, 1503, he arrived at the south-eastern extremity of the isthmus, at its narrowest part, little thinking that by ascending the mountains in the interior, the wide Pacific would have been seen rolling beneath him. Here, however, his crews refused to continue the voyage. The ships were shattered, the men worn out with toil, and on the 1st of May, leaving the mainland for ever, he steered northward, and arrived at Cuba, where their vessels were found no longer seaworthy; and Diego Mendez, one of the most intrepid and faithful of his officers, volunteered to endeavour to reach St. Domingo in a canoe with a few Indians. Columbus was left for many weeks, during which his men mutinied, and some escaped; the remainder were so feeble, that the Indians began to grow negligent in supplying them with provisions.

It was then that Columbus employed his astronomical knowledge to good effect, by predicting an eclipse of the moon, so terrifying the Indians, that

they hastened to bring food in abundance. Eight months thus elapsed. The messengers of Columbus had had great difficulty in persuading Ovando to send a vessel for Columbus and the remains of the crew. It is to be feared that this bad man wished him to perish in his abandonment. At length, after many excuses, even at St. Domingo indignation began to murmur at such black and shameless ingratitude, and Ovando was obliged to yield. A vessel was despatched, and arrived at the wrecked and useless vessel which for nearly a year had been the dwelling of the discoverer of America; and on the 13th of August, 1504, he arrived at St. Domingo, where Ovando received him with much apparent courtesy, but allowed him to exercise none of the powers granted to him by his original agreement with the sovereigns.

At length, subdued in spirit by the ungrateful treatment he received, on the 12th of September he left finally the regions he had opened to Europe, and, on the 7th of November he landed at St. Lucar; thus concluding his last and most disastrous, but yet not least important, voyage.

Columbus, aged and infirm, might now have expected honourable repose; but his last days were filled with little more than afflictions and trials. The property in his possession had been expended during his last residence at St. Domingo and in securing his return. Immense sums, indeed, were due to him; but all the delays and obstacles that the Indian Board, over which his old enemy

Fonseca still presided, could throw in his way, were employed to harass him. To crown all, when he arrived in Spain, his munificent and changeless friend, the queen, was on her death-bed, and in three weeks from his landing she died. Well did he know the difference between the selfish Ferdinand and the noble Isabella.

By the cold-hearted monarch all his applications were treated with indifference. He was referred to the officers of government, and personal enmity found ample means for seeming delay, and real neglect, in official forms; and thus he who had opened to Spain the road to the wealth of the New World, was left to languish in unrequited poverty. He employed various persons in unsuccessful missions to the court; and among the singular events of the history of this great man, not the least singular is that one of the persons thus employed, and of whom he speaks in one of his letters as 'a worthy but unfortunate man, who had not profited as much as he deserved by his undertakings, and who had always been disposed to render him service,' was no other than the man from whose Christian name the regions discovered by Columbus have received their permanent denomination, Amerigo Vespucci.

All his efforts were vain. In a brief interval of recovered strength he visited Ferdinand, who received him courteously, and paid him with smiles and good words! In making his will, in which his son Diego was declared his heir, he bequeathed

TOMB OF COLUMBUS AT HAVANNAH. 159

little more than large and most righteous claims, admitted but never paid to himself, and only in part and by compromise paid to his heirs.

His continued illness gradually undermined his iron constitution; and before long he was laid on the bed of death. He paid to the last ceremonies prescribed by the Church the most exact attention. He died, aged seventy, at Valladolid, May 20th, 1506. The last words he was heard to utter were one of the accustomed sentences, 'Into Thy hands, O Lord, I commend my spirit!'

He was first interred at Valladolid, and, six years later, his remains were removed to Seville, and deposited in the cathedral there, where Ferdinand had no objection to erect a stately monument to his memory. From this place, in 1536, they were removed to St. Domingo, where they remained till 1795; when, on the cession of Hispaniola to the French, the Spaniards resolved that they should be transported to Cuba. The tomb was opened on the 20th of December, and the fragments of a leaden coffin, with *bones and dust*, were found, put into a coffin of gilded lead, and, after a religious service the next day, taken to the shore in an imposing military and ecclesiastical procession. A similar procession was formed at Havannah, to receive the coffin and convey it to the cathedral, where it was deposited on the right side of the high altar.

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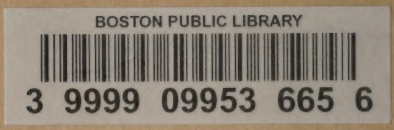

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